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INSTITUTES

OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

72 **BY**
JOHN CALVIN.

**TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LATIN, AND COLLATED WITH
THE AUTHOR'S LAST EDITION IN FRENCH,**

BY JOHN ALLEN.

Non tamen omnino potuit mors invida totum
Tollere Calvinum terris; æterna manebunt
Ingenii monumenta tui: et livoris iniqui
Languida paulatim cum flamma resederit, omnes
Religio qua pura nitet se fundet in oras
Fama tui. BUCHANAN.

THIRD AMERICAN EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

76 **VOL. I.**

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.
JAMES RUSSELL, PUBLISHING AGENT.

1841.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Presbyterian Board of Publication, in introducing to the public a new edition of the inimitable "Institutes of the Christian Religion," do not wish to be regarded as adopting all the sentiments and forms of expression of the venerated writer ; although they agree with him in his general views, and admire the skill and learning with which he has pointed out the relative positions and bearings of the great doctrines of revelation. Calvin was better qualified than any of his contemporaries, to present revealed truth in a connected and systematic form. His great natural abilities, his profound erudition, his well balanced and discriminating judgment, and his habits of diligent investigation, eminently fitted him to prepare such a work as the "Institutes," in which the doctrines of the gospel are so clearly developed and harmonized, that the system has been closely associated with his name, from the period of its publication until the present time.

The honour of Calvin consisted, not in suggesting ingenious theories and speculations, but in his general accuracy in interpreting the Holy Scriptures, and in detecting and pointing out the connection of Scripture doctrines, which, instead of being insulated, were shown to occupy their respective places in forming a complete and perfect system of Divine truth. The doctrines embraced in the formularies of the Presbyterian Church are termed Calvinistic, from their general accordance with Calvin's interpretation of scriptural truth ; but the admission of this term, as explanatory of their general character, is not understood as by any means implying an entire coincidence in the views of Calvin, or a submission to his authority as an umpire in theological controversies. Although a learned and pious, he was a fallible man ; and his opinions, although deserving of profound respect, are not to be blindly followed.

While admitting that the "Institutes," considering the times and circumstances in which they were written, form an invaluable body of divinity, still it must be acknowledged, that some of the doctrines therein maintained have been more luminously set forth in modern times. We would especially mention as an instance the doctrine of justification through the

imputed righteousness of Christ. Some of the expressions of Calvin on the subject of reprobation may be regarded as too unqualified, and we can no further endorse them than as they are incorporated in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. The most decidedly objectionable feature in the "Christian Institutes," is to be found in the explanation of the Fourth Commandment, where the author asserts the abrogation of the Sabbath. In Calvin's view, this ordinance was a mere type of better blessings, and, with the types and ceremonies of the old dispensation, was done away by the introduction of a new and better dispensation. In this opinion there can be no doubt that he greatly erred; and so universal is the conviction of the Church on the perpetual obligation of the Sabbath as a moral institution, that no danger is to be apprehended from a contrary view, even under the sanction of so great a name as that of Calvin. In justice to his opinion on this subject, however, it should be stated, that he distinctly recognized not only the propriety but the necessity of a consecration of stated days for public religious services, without which regulation, he declares that "it is so far from being possible to preserve order and decorum, that if it were abolished, the Church would be in imminent danger of immediate convulsion and ruin." It is much to be lamented that so great a mind should have been led astray on so important a point by attempting to avoid an opposite extreme.

The Board of Publication have been induced to undertake this edition, by the very generous offer of the First and Second Presbyterian Churches in Baltimore, of which the Rev. John Backus and the Rev. Dr. R. J. Breckinridge are respectively Pastors, to defray the expense of stereotyping the work. Under the direction of the Executive Committee of the Board, the translation has been diligently compared throughout with the original Latin and French, and various corrections have been made to convey the meaning of the author more distinctly and accurately. This laborious duty has been performed by a member of the Publishing Committee. The intrinsic excellence of the work, taken in connection with the attractive style, and comparative cheapness, of the present edition, induces the Committee to hope, that it may be widely circulated and carefully studied, both by the clergy and laymen of the Presbyterian Church.

In behalf of the Executive Committee,

WILLIAM M. ENGLER, EDITOR.

THE

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE English Reader is here presented with a translation of one of the principal theological productions of the sixteenth century. Few persons, into whose hands this translation is likely to fall, will require to be informed that the Author of the original work was one of an illustrious triumvirate, who acted a most conspicuous part in what has been generally and justly denominated **THE REFORMATION**. Of that important revolution in ecclesiastical affairs, so necessary to the interests of true religion, and productive of such immense advantages even to civil society, **LUTHER**, **ZUINGLE**, and **CALVIN**, were honoured, by the providence of God, to be the most highly distinguished instruments. It is no degradation to the memory of the many other ornaments of that age, to consider them as brilliant satellites in the firmament of the Church, revolving round these primary luminaries, to whom they were indebted for much of that lustre which they diffused over the earth; while they were all together revolving around one and the same common centre, though, it must be confessed, with considerable varieties of approximation, velocity, and obliquity in their courses; yet all deriving more or less copious communications of light from the great Sun of the moral system, **THE TRUE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**.

Differing in the powers of their minds, as well as in the temperament of their bodily constitutions, placed in different circumstances, and called to act in different scenes, these leading Reformers, though engaged in the same common cause, displayed their characteristic and peculiar ex-

cellences ; which, it is no disparagement of that cause to admit, were likewise accompanied by peculiar failings. It is not the design of this preface to portray and discriminate their respective characters. They alike devoted their lives and labours to rescue Christianity from the absurdities, superstitions, and vices by which it had been so deplorably deformed, mutilated, and obscured, and to recall the attention of mankind from the doubtful traditions of men to the unerring word of God. But while they were all distinguished Reformers, Calvin has been generally acknowledged to have been the most eminent theologian of the three.

Such was the superiority of the talents and attainments of Calvin to those of most other great men, that the strictest truth is in danger of being taken for exaggeration. It is impossible for any candid and intelligent person to have even a slight acquaintance with his writings, without admiring his various knowledge, extensive learning, profound penetration, solid judgment, acute reasoning, pure morality, and fervent piety.

His COMMENTARIES on the Scriptures have been celebrated for a juster method of exposition than had been exhibited by any preceding writer. Above a hundred years after his death, Poole, the author of the Synopsis, in the preface to that valuable work, says, " Calvin's Commentaries abound in solid discussions of theological subjects, and practical improvements of them. Subsequent writers have borrowed most of their materials from Calvin, and his interpretations adorn the books even of those who repay the obligation by reproaching their master." And nothing can more satisfactorily evince the high estimation to which they are still entitled from the biblical student, than the following testimony, given, after the lapse of another century, by the late learned Bishop Horsley : " I hold the memory of Calvin in high veneration : his works have a place in my library ; and in the study of the Holy Scriptures, he is one of the commentators whom I frequently consult."

But perhaps, of all the writings of Calvin, none has excited so much attention as his *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION*.

His original design in commencing this work is stated by himself, in the beginning of his dedication, to have been to supply his countrymen, the French, with an elementary compendium for their instruction in the principles of true religion. But we learn from Beza that, by the time of its completion, existing circumstances furnished the Author with an additional motive for sending it into the world, during his residence at Basil, whither he had retired to avoid the persecution which was then raging in France against all the dissentients from the Church of Rome. Francis the First, king of France, courted the friendship of the Protestant princes of Germany; and knowing their detestation of the cruelties which he employed against his subjects of the reformed religion, he endeavoured to excuse his conduct by alleging that he caused none to be put to death except some few fanatics; who, so far from taking the word of God as the rule of their faith, gave themselves up to the impulses of their disordered imaginations, and even openly avowed a contempt of magistrates and sovereign princes. Unable to bear such foul aspersions of his brethren, Calvin determined on the immediate publication of this treatise, which he thought would serve as an answer to the calumnies circulated by the enemies of the truth, and as an apology for his pious and persecuted countrymen.

The Dedication to Francis is one of the most masterly compositions of modern times. The purity, elegance, and energy of style; the bold, yet respectful, freedom of address; the firm attachment to the Divine word; the Christian fortitude in the midst of persecution; the triumphant refutation of the calumnies of detractors; with other qualities which distinguish this celebrated remonstrance, will surely permit no reader of taste or piety to withhold

his concurrence from the general admiration which it has received.

The Author composed this treatise in Latin and French ; and though, at its first appearance, it was little more than an outline of what it afterwards became, it was received with uncommon approbation, and a second edition of it was soon required. How many editions it passed through during his life, it is difficult, if not impossible, now to ascertain ; but it obtained a very extensive circulation, and was reprinted several times, and every time was further improved and enlarged by him, till, in the year 1559, twenty-three years after the first impression, he put the finishing hand to his work, and published it in Latin and French, with his last corrections and additions.

The circulation which it enjoyed was not confined to persons capable of reading it in the languages in which it was written. It was translated into High Dutch, Low Dutch, Italian, and Spanish.

Soon after the publication of the Author's last edition, it was translated from the Latin into English. In this language it appears to have reached six editions in the life of the Translator. A reflection on the small number of persons who may be supposed to have had inclination and ability to read such a book at that period, compared with the number of readers in the present age, may excite some wonder that there should have been a demand for so many editions. But no surprise at this circumstance will be felt by any person acquainted with the high estimation in which the works of the Author were held by the venerable Reformers of the Church of England, and their immediate successors, as well as by the great majority of religious people in this country. This is not a question of opinion, but an undeniable fact. Dr. Heylin, the admirer and biographer of Archbishop Laud, speaking of the early part of the seventeenth century, says, that Calvin's " Book of Institutes was, for the most part, the foundation on which

the young divines of those times did build their studies." The great Dr. Saunderson, who was chaplain to King Charles I., and, after the restoration of Charles II., was created Bishop of Lincoln, says, "When I began to set myself to the study of divinity as my proper business, Calvin's Institutions were recommended to me, as they were generally to all young scholars in those times, as the best and perfectest system of divinity, and the fittest to be laid as a ground-work in the study of this profession. And, indeed, my expectation was not at all deceived in the reading of those Institutions." *

The great changes which have taken place in our language render it difficult to form a correct opinion of the merits of Mr. Norton's translation, which was first published about two hundred and fifty years ago. It must give rather a favourable idea of its execution, that it was carefully revised by the Rev. David Whitehead, a man of learning and piety, who, in the reign of Henry VIII., was nominated by Archbishop Cranmer to a bishopric in Ireland, and, soon after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, was solicited by that Princess to fill the metropolitan see of Canterbury, but declined the preferment. But, whatever were the merits or defects of that translation at its first appearance, it has long been too antiquated, uncouth, and obscure, to convey any just idea of the original work, and abounds with passages which, to the modern English reader, cannot but be altogether unintelligible.

The intrinsic excellence of the book, its importance in the history of theological controversy, the celebrity of the

* It is not uncommon, among persons of a certain class, to represent the leading principles of Calvin as unfavourable to practical religion, and to that kind of preaching which is adapted to affect the hearts and consciences of the hearers. A reference to the most able and intelligent theologians and preachers who have held those principles, and upon whom they may reasonably be concluded to have exerted their genuine and fullest influence, will amply evince the inaccuracy of this representation. Of the excellent divine quoted above, King Charles I. was wont to say, that "he carried his ears to hear other preachers, but his conscience to hear Mr. Saunderson."

Author, the application of his name to designate the leading principles of the system he maintained, and the frequent collision of sentiment respecting various parts of that system, combine with other considerations to render it a matter of wonder, that it has not long ago been given to the English public in a new dress. The importance of it has also been much increased by the recent controversy respecting Calvinism, commenced by Dr. Tomline, the present Bishop of Lincoln, in which such direct and copious reference has been made to the writings of this Reformer, and especially to his *CHRISTIAN INSTITUTES*. These circumstances and considerations have led to the present translation and publication, which, from the very respectable encouragement it has received, the Translator trusts will be regarded as an acceptable service to the religious public.

Among the different methods of translation which have been recommended, he has adopted that which appeared to him best fitted to the present undertaking. A servile adherence to the letter of the original, the style of which is so very remote from the English idiom, he thought would convey a very inadequate representation of the work; such extreme fidelity, to use an expression of Cowper's, being seldom successful, even in a faithful transmission of the precise sentiments of the author to the mind of the reader. A mere attention to the ideas and sentiments of the original, to the neglect of its style and manner, would expose the Translator of a treatise of this nature to no small danger of misrepresenting the meaning of the Author, by too frequent and unnecessary deviations from his language. He has, therefore, aimed at a medium between servility and looseness, and endeavoured to follow the style of the original as far as the respective idioms of the Latin and English would admit.

After the greater part of the work had been translated, he had the happiness to meet with an edition in French,

of which he has availed himself in translating the remainder, and in the revision of what he had translated before. Every person, who understands any two languages, will be aware that the ambiguity of one will sometimes be explained by the precision of another; and, notwithstanding the acknowledged superiority of the Latin to the French in most of the qualities which constitute the excellence of a language, the case of the article is not the only one in which Calvin's French elucidates his Latin.

The scriptural quotations which occur in the work, the Translator has given, generally, in the words of our common English version; sometimes according to the readings in the margin of that version; and, in a few instances, he has literally translated the version adopted by the Author, where the context required his peculiar reading to be preserved. Almost all the writers of that age, writing chiefly in a dead language, were accustomed to speak of their adversaries in language which the polished manners of the modern times have discarded, and which would now be deemed illiberal and scurrilous. Where these cases occur, the Translator has not thought himself bound to a literal rendering of every word, or at liberty to refine them entirely away, but has adopted such expressions as he apprehends will give a faithful representation of the spirit of the Author to modern readers.

Intending this work as a complete system of theology, the Author has made it the repository of his sentiments on all points of faith and practice. The whole being distributed into four parts, in conformity to the Apostles' Creed, and this plan being very different from that of most other bodies of divinity, the Translator has borrowed from the Latin edition of Amsterdam a very perspicuous general syllabus, which will give the reader a clear view of the original design and plan of the treatise.

He would not be understood to represent these Institutes as a perfect summary of Christian doctrines and morals, or

to profess an unqualified approbation of all the sentiments they contain. This is a homage to which no uninspired writings can ever be entitled. But the simplicity of the method; the freedom from the barbarous terms, captious questions, minute distinctions, and intricate subtilties of many other Divines; the clearness and closeness of argument; the complete refutation of the advocates of the Romish Church, sometimes by obvious conclusions from their professed principles, sometimes by clear proofs of the absurdities they involve; the intimate knowledge of ecclesiastical history; the intimate acquaintance with former theological controversies; the perspicuity of scriptural interpretation; and the uniform spirit of genuine piety, which pervade the book, cannot escape the observation of any judicious reader.

It has been advised by some persons that the translation should be accompanied by a few notes, to elucidate and enforce some passages, and to correct others; but, on all the consideration which the Translator has been able to give to this subject, he has thought it would be best to content himself with the humble office of placing the sentiments of Calvin before the reader, with all the fidelity in his power, without any addition or limitation. He hopes that the present publication will serve the cause of true religion, and that the reputation of the work itself will sustain no diminution from the form in which it now appears.

LONDON, *May* 12, 1813.

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THE
AUTHOR'S PREFACE
TO
AN EDITION PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1559,
WITH HIS
LAST CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

IN the first edition of this work, not expecting that success which the Lord, in his infinite goodness, hath given, I handled the subject for the most part in a superficial manner, as is usual in small treatises. But when I understood that it had obtained from almost all pious persons such a favourable acceptance as I never could have presumed to wish, much less to hope; while I was conscious of receiving far more attention than I had deserved, I thought it would evince great ingratitude, if I did not endeavour at least, according to my humble ability, to make some suitable return for the attentions paid to me — attentions of themselves calculated to stimulate my industry. Nor did I attempt this only in the second edition; but in every succeeding one the work has been improved by some further enlargements. But though I repented not the labour then devoted to it, yet I never satisfied myself, till it was arranged in the order in which it is now published; and I trust I have here presented to my readers what their judgments will unite in approving. Of my diligent application to the accomplishment of this service for the Church of God, I can produce abundant proof. For, last winter, when I thought that a quartan ague would speedily terminate in my death, the more my disorder increased, the less I spared myself, till I had finished this book, to leave it behind me, as some grateful re-

turn to such kind solicitations of the religious public. Indeed, I would rather it had been done sooner ; but it is soon enough, if well enough. I shall think it has appeared at the proper time, when I shall find it to have been more beneficial than before to the Church of God. This is my only wish.

I should indeed be ill requited for my labour, if I did not content myself with the approbation of God alone, despising equally the foolish and perverse judgments of ignorant men, and the calumnies and detractions of the wicked. For though God hath wholly devoted my mind to study the enlargement of his kingdom, and the promotion of general usefulness ; and I have the testimony of my own conscience, of angels, and of God himself, that, since I undertook the office of a teacher in the Church, I have had no other object in view than to profit the Church by maintaining the pure doctrine of godliness ; yet I suppose there is no man more slandered or calumniated than myself. When this Preface was actually in the press, I had certain information, that at Augsburg, where the States of the Empire were assembled, a report had been circulated of my defection to popery, and received with unbecoming eagerness in the courts of the princes. This is the gratitude of those who cannot be unacquainted with the numerous proofs of my constancy, which not only refute such a foul calumny, but, with all equitable and humane judges, ought to preserve me from it. But the devil, with all his host, is deceived, if he think to overwhelm me with vile falsehoods, or to render me more timid, indolent, or dilatory, by such indignities. For I trust that God, in his infinite goodness, will enable me to persevere with patient constancy in the career of his holy calling ; of which I afford my pious readers a fresh proof in this edition.

Now, my design in this work has been to prepare and qualify students of theology for the reading of the divine word, that they may have an easy introduction to it, and be enabled to proceed in it without any obstruction. For I think I have given such a comprehensive summary, and orderly arrangement of all the branches of religion, that, with proper attention,

no person will find any difficulty in determining what ought to be the principal objects of his research in the Scripture, and to what end he ought to refer any thing it contains. This way, therefore, being prepared, if I should hereafter publish any expositions of the Scripture, I shall have no need to introduce long discussions respecting doctrines, or digressions on common topics, and therefore shall always compress them within a narrow compass. This will relieve the pious reader from great trouble and tediousness, provided he come previously furnished with the necessary information, by a knowledge of the present work. But as the reason of this design is very evident in my numerous Commentaries, I would rather have it known from the fact itself, than from my declaration.

Farewell, friendly reader; and if you receive any benefit from my labours, let me have the assistance of your prayers with God our Father.

GENEVA, *1st August*, 1559.

DEDICATION.

*To His Most Christian Majesty, FRANCIS, King of the French,
and his Sovereign, John Calvin wisheth peace and salvation
in Christ.*

WHEN I began this work, Sire, nothing was further from my thoughts than writing a book which would afterwards be presented to your Majesty. My intention was only to lay down some elementary principles, by which inquirers on the subject of religion might be instructed in the nature of true piety. And this labour I undertook chiefly for my countrymen, the French, of whom I apprehended multitudes to be hungering and thirsting after Christ, but saw very few possessing any real knowledge of him. That this was my design, the book itself proves by its simple method and unadorned composition. But when I perceived that the fury of certain wicked men in your kingdom had grown to such a height, as to leave no room in the land for sound doctrine, I thought I should be usefully employed, if in the same work I delivered my instructions to them, and exhibited my confession to you, that you may know the nature of that doctrine, which is the object of such unbounded rage to those madmen who are now disturbing the country with fire and sword. For I shall not be afraid to acknowledge, that this treatise contains a summary of that very doctrine, which, according to their clamours, deserves to be punished with imprisonment, banishment, proscription, and flames, and to be exterminated from the face of the earth. I well know with what atrocious insinuations your ears have been filled by them, in order to render our cause most odious in your esteem; but your clemency should lead you to consider that, if accusation be accounted a sufficient evidence of guilt, there will be an end of all innocence in words and actions. If any one, indeed, with a view to bring an odium upon the doctrine which I am endeavouring to defend, should

allege that it has long ago been condemned by the general consent, and suppressed by many judicial decisions, this will be only equivalent to saying, that it has been sometimes violently rejected through the influence and power of its adversaries, and sometimes insidiously and fraudulently oppressed by falsehoods, artifices, and calumnies. Violence is displayed, when sanguinary sentences are passed against it without the cause being heard; and fraud, when it is unjustly accused of sedition and mischief. Lest any one should suppose that these our complaints are unfounded, you yourself, Sire, can bear witness of the false calumnies with which you hear it daily traduced; that its only tendency is to wrest the sceptres of kings out of their hands, to overturn all the tribunals and judicial proceedings, to subvert all order and governments, to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the people, to abrogate all laws, to scatter all properties and possessions, and, in a word, to involve every thing in total confusion. And yet you hear the smallest portion of what is alleged against it; for such horrible things are circulated amongst the vulgar, that, if they were true, the whole world would justly pronounce it and its abettors worthy of a thousand fires and gibbets.* Who, then, will wonder at its becoming the object of public odium, where credit is given to such most iniquitous accusations? This is the cause of the general consent and conspiracy to condemn us and our doctrine. Hurried away with this impulse, those who sit in judgment pronounce for sentences the prejudices they brought from home with them; and think their duty fully discharged if they condemn none to be punished but such as are convicted by their own confession, or by sufficient proofs. Convicted of what crime? Of this condemned doctrine, they say. But with what justice is it condemned? Now, the ground of defence was not to abjure the doctrine itself, but to maintain its truth. On this subject, however, not a word is allowed to be uttered.

Wherefore I beseech you, Sire, — and surely it is not an unreasonable request, — to take upon yourself the entire cognizance of this cause, which has hitherto been confusedly and carelessly agitated, without any order of law, and with outrageous passion rather than judicial gravity. Think not that I am

now meditating my own individual defence, in order to effect a safe return to my native country ; for, though I feel the affection which every man ought to feel for it, yet, under the existing circumstances, I regret not my removal from it. But I plead the cause of all the godly, and consequently of Christ himself, which, having been in these times persecuted and trampled on in all ways in your kingdom, now lies in a most deplorable state ; and this indeed rather through the tyranny of certain Pharisees, than with your knowledge. How this comes to pass is foreign to my present purpose to say ; but it certainly lies in a most afflicted state. For the ungodly have gone to such lengths, that the truth of Christ, if not vanquished, dissipated, and entirely destroyed, is buried, as it were, in ignoble obscurity, while the poor, despised church is either destroyed by cruel massacres, or driven away into banishment, or menaced and terrified into total silence. And still they continue their wonted madness and ferocity, pushing violently against the wall already bent, and finishing the ruin they have begun. In the mean time, no one comes forward to plead the cause against such furies. If there be any persons desirous of appearing most favourable to the truth, they only venture an opinion, that forgiveness should be extended to the error and imprudence of ignorant people. For this is the language of these moderate men, calling *that* error and imprudence which they know to be the certain truth of God, and *those* ignorant people, whose understanding they perceive not to have been so despicable to Christ, but that he has favoured them with the mysteries of his heavenly wisdom. Thus all are ashamed of the Gospel. But it shall be yours, Sire, not to turn away your ears or thoughts from so just a defence, especially in a cause of such importance as the maintenance of God's glory unimpaired in the world, the preservation of the honour of divine truth, and the continuance of the kingdom of Christ uninjured among us. This is a cause worthy of your attention, worthy of your cognizance, worthy of your throne. This consideration constitutes true royalty, to acknowledge yourself in the government of your kingdom to be the minister of God. For where the glory of God is not made the end of the government, it is not a legitimate sovereignty, but a

usurpation. And he is deceived who expects lasting prosperity in that kingdom which is not ruled by the sceptre of God, that is, his holy word; for that heavenly oracle cannot fail, which declares that "where there is no vision, the people perish." (a) Nor should you be seduced from this pursuit by a contempt of our meanness. We are fully conscious to ourselves how very mean and abject we are, being miserable sinners before God, and accounted most despicable by men; being (if you please) the refuse of the world, deserving of the vilest appellations that can be found; so that nothing remains for us to glory in before God, but his mercy alone, by which, without any merit of ours, we have been admitted to the hope of eternal salvation, and before men nothing but our weakness, the slightest confession of which is esteemed by them as the greatest disgrace. But our doctrine must stand, exalted above all the glory, and invincible by all the power of the world; because it is not ours, but the doctrine of the living God, and of his Christ, whom the Father hath constituted King, that he may have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth, and that he may rule in such a manner, that the whole earth, with its strength of iron and with its splendour of gold and silver, smitten by the rod of his mouth, may be broken to pieces like a potter's vessel; (b) for thus do the prophets foretell the magnificence of his kingdom.

Our adversaries reply, that our pleading the word of God is a false pretence, and that we are nefarious corrupters of it. But that this is not only a malicious calumny, but egregious impudence, by reading our confession, you will, in your wisdom, be able to judge. Yet something further is necessary to be said, to excite your attention, or at least to prepare your mind for this perusal. Paul's direction, that every prophecy be framed "according to the analogy of faith," (c) has fixed an invariable standard by which all interpretation of Scripture ought to be tried. If our principles be examined by this rule of faith, the victory is ours. For what is more consistent with faith than to acknowledge ourselves naked of all virtue, that we may be clothed by God; empty of all good, that we may

(a) Prov. xxix. 18.

(b) Dan. ii. 34. Isaiah xi. 4. Psalm ii. 9.

(c) Rom. xii. 6.

be filled by him ; slaves to sin, that we may be liberated by him ; blind, that we may be enlightened by him ; lame, that we may be guided ; weak, that we may be supported by him ; to divest ourselves of all ground of glorying, that he alone may be eminently glorious, and that we may glory in him ? When we advance these and similar sentiments, they interrupt us with complaints that this is the way to overturn, I know not what blind light of nature, pretended preparations, free will, and works meritorious of eternal salvation, together with all their supererogations ; because they cannot bear that the praise and glory of all goodness, strength, righteousness, and wisdom, should remain entirely with God. But we read of none being reproved for having drawn too freely from the fountain of living waters ; on the contrary, they are severely upbraided who have “ hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (d) Again, what is more consistent with faith, than to assure ourselves of God being a propitious Father, where Christ is acknowledged as a brother and Mediator ? than securely to expect all prosperity and happiness from Him, whose unspeakable love towards us went so far, that “ he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us ? ” (e) than to rest in the certain expectation of salvation and eternal life, when we reflect upon the Father’s gift of Christ, in whom such treasures are hidden ? Here they oppose us, and complain that this certainty of confidence is chargeable with arrogance and presumption. But as we ought to presume nothing of ourselves, so we should presume every thing of God ; nor are we divested of vain glory for any other reason than that we may learn to glory in the Lord. What shall I say more ? Review, Sire, all the parts of our cause, and consider us worse than the most abandoned of mankind, unless you clearly discover that we thus “ both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God,” (f) because we believe that “ this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.” (g) For this hope some of us are bound in chains, others are lashed with scourges, others are carried about as laughing-stocks, others are outlawed, others are cruelly

(d) Jer. ii. 13.

(e) Rom. viii. 32.

(f) 1 Tim. iv. 10.

(g) John xvii. 3.

tortured, others escape by flight ; but we are all reduced to extreme perplexities, execrated with dreadful curses, cruelly slandered, and treated with the greatest indignities. Now, look at our adversaries, (I speak of the order of priests, at whose will and directions others carry on these hostilities against us,) and consider a little with me by what principles they are actuated. The true religion, which is taught in the Scriptures, and ought to be universally maintained, they readily permit both themselves and others to be ignorant of, and to treat with neglect and contempt. They think it unimportant what any one holds or denies concerning God and Christ, provided he submits his mind with an implicit faith (as they call it) to the judgment of the Church. Nor are they much affected, if the glory of God happens to be violated with open blasphemies, provided no one lift a finger against the primacy of the Apostolic See, and the authority of their holy Mother Church. Why, therefore, do they contend with such extreme bitterness and cruelty for the mass, purgatory, pilgrimages, and similar trifles, and deny that any piety can be maintained without a most explicit faith, so to speak, in these things ; whereas they prove none of them from the Word of God ? Why, but because their belly is their god, their kitchen is their religion ; deprived of which they consider themselves no longer as Christians, or even as men. For though some feast themselves in splendour, and others subsist on slender fare, yet all live on the same pot, which, without this fuel, would not only cool, but completely freeze. Every one of them, therefore, who is most solicitous for his belly, is found to be a most strenuous champion for their faith. Indeed, they universally exert themselves for the preservation of their kingdom, and the repletion of their bellies ; but not one of them discovers the least indication of sincere zeal.

Nor do their attacks on our doctrine cease here ; they urge every topic of accusation and abuse to render it an object of hatred or suspicion. They call it novel, and of recent origin, — they cavil at it as doubtful and uncertain, — they inquire by what miracles it is confirmed, — they ask whether it is right for it to be received contrary to the consent of so many holy fathers, and the custom of the highest antiquity, — they

urge us to confess that it is schismatical in stirring up opposition against the Church, or that the Church was wholly extinct for many ages, during which no such thing was known. — Lastly, they say all arguments are unnecessary ; for that its nature may be determined by its fruits, since it has produced such a multitude of sects, so many factious tumults, and such great licentiousness of vices. It is indeed very easy for them to insult a deserted cause with the credulous and ignorant multitude ; but, if we had also the liberty of speaking in our turn, this acrimony, which they now discover in violently foaming against us with equal licentiousness and impunity, would presently cool.

In the first place, their calling it novel is highly injurious to God, whose holy word deserves not to be accused of novelty. I have no doubt of its being new to them, to whom Jesus Christ and the Gospel are equally new. But those who know the antiquity of this preaching of Paul, “ that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification,” (*h*) will find no novelty among us. That it has long been concealed, buried, and unknown, is the crime of human impiety. Now that the goodness of God has restored it to us, it ought at least to be allowed its just claim of antiquity.

From the same source of ignorance springs the notion of its being doubtful and uncertain. This is the very thing which the Lord complains of by his prophet ; that “ the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib,” (*i*) but that his people know not him. But however they may laugh at its uncertainty, if they were called to seal their own doctrine with their blood and lives, it would appear how much they value it. Very different is our confidence, which dreads neither the terrors of death, nor even the tribunal of God.

Their requiring miracles of us is altogether unreasonable ; for we forge no new Gospel, but retain the very same whose truth was confirmed by all the miracles ever wrought by Christ and the apostles. But they have this peculiar advantage above us, that they can confirm their faith by continual miracles even to this day. But the truth is, they allege miracles which are calculated to unsettle a mind otherwise well established, they

(*h*) Rom. iv. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 17.

(*i*) Isaiah i. 3.

are so frivolous and ridiculous, or vain and false. Nor, if they were ever so preternatural, ought they to have any weight in opposition to the truth of God, since the name of God ought to be sanctified in all places and at all times, whether by miraculous events, or by the common order of nature. This fallacy might perhaps be more specious, if the Scripture did not apprize us of the legitimate end and use of miracles. For Mark informs us, that the miracles which followed the preaching of the apostles were wrought in confirmation (*k*) of it, and Luke tells us, that (*l*) "the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace," when "signs and wonders" were "done by the hands" of the apostles. Very similar to which is the assertion of the apostle, that "salvation was confirmed" by the preaching of the Gospel, "God also bearing witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles." (*m*) But those things which we are told were seals of the Gospel, shall we pervert to undermine the faith of the Gospel? Those things which were designed to be testimonials of the truth, shall we accommodate to the confirmation of falsehood? It is right, therefore, that the doctrine, which, according to the evangelist, claims the first attention, be examined and tried in the first place; and if it be approved, then it ought to derive confirmation from miracles. But it is the characteristic of sound doctrine, given by Christ, that it tends to promote, not the glory of men, but the glory of God. (*n*) Christ having laid down this proof of a doctrine, it is wrong to esteem those as miracles which are directed to any other end than the glorification of the name of God alone. And we should remember that Satan has his wonders, which, though they are juggling tricks rather than real miracles, are such as to delude the ignorant and inexperienced. Magicians and enchanters have always been famous for miracles; idolatry has been supported by astonishing miracles; and yet we admit them not as proofs of the superstition of magicians or idolaters. With this engine also the simplicity of the vulgar was anciently assailed by the Donatists, who abounded in miracles. We therefore give the same answer now to our adversaries as Augustine (*o*) gave to the Donatists, that our Lord hath cautioned us against these miracle-mongers by his prediction, that there

(*k*) Mark xvi. 20.(*l*) Acts xiv. 3.(*m*) Heb. ii. 3, 4.(*n*) John vii. 18. viii. 50.(*o*) In Joan. tract. 13.

should arise false prophets, who, by various signs and lying wonders, "should deceive (if possible) the very elect." (p) And Paul has told us, that the kingdom of Antichrist would be "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." (q) But these miracles (they say) are wrought, not by idols, or sorcerers, or false prophets, but by saints; as if we were ignorant, that it is a stratagem of Satan to "transform" himself "into an angel of light." (r) At the tomb of Jeremiah, (s) who was buried in Egypt, the Egyptians formerly offered sacrifices and other divine honours. Was not this abusing God's holy prophet to the purposes of idolatry? Yet they supposed this veneration of his sepulchre to be rewarded with a cure for the bite of serpents. What shall we say, but that it has been, and ever will be, the most righteous vengeance of God to "send those who receive not the love of the truth strong delusions, that they should believe a lie"? (t) We are by no means without miracles, and such as are certain, and not liable to cavils. But those under which they shelter themselves are mere illusions of Satan, seducing the people from the true worship of God to vanity.

Another calumny is their charging us with opposition to the fathers, — I mean the writers of the earlier and purer ages, — as if those writers were abettors of their impiety; whereas, if the contest were to be terminated by this authority, the victory in most parts of the controversy — to speak in the most modest terms — would be on our side. But though the writings of those fathers contain many wise and excellent things, yet in some respects they have suffered the common fate of mankind; these very dutiful children reverence only their errors and mistakes, but their excellences they either overlook, or conceal, or corrupt; so that it may be truly said to be their only study to collect dross from the midst of gold. Then they overwhelm us with senseless clamours, as despisers and enemies of the fathers. But we do not hold them in such contempt, but that, if it were consistent with my present design, I could easily support by their suffrages most of the sentiments that we now maintain. But while we make use of their writings, we always remember that "all things are ours," to serve us, not to have

(p) Matt. xxiv. 24.

(q) 2 Thess. ii. 9.

(r) 2 Cor. xi. 14.

(s) Hierom. in præf. Jerem.

(t) 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

dominion over us, and that "we are Christ's" (*v*) alone, and owe him universal obedience. He who neglects this distinction will have nothing decided in religion; since those holy men were ignorant of many things, frequently at variance with each other, and sometimes even inconsistent with themselves. There is great reason, they say, for the admonition of Solomon, "not to transgress or remove the ancient landmarks, which our fathers have set." (*w*) But the same rule is not applicable to the bounding of fields, and to the obedience of faith, which ought to be ready to "forget her own people and her father's house." (*x*) But if they are so fond of allegorizing, why do they not explain the apostles, rather than any others, to be those fathers, whose appointed landmarks it is so unlawful to remove? For this is the interpretation of Jerome, whose works they have received into their canons. But if they insist on preserving the landmarks of those whom they understand to be intended, why do they at pleasure so freely transgress them themselves? There were two fathers, (*y*) of whom one said, that our God neither eats nor drinks, and therefore needs neither cups nor dishes; the other, that sacred things require no gold, and that gold is no recommendation of that which is not purchased with gold. This landmark therefore is transgressed by those who in sacred things are so much delighted with gold, silver, ivory, marble, jewels, and silks, and suppose that God is not rightly worshipped, unless all things abound in exquisite splendour, or rather extravagant profusion. There was a father (*z*) who said he freely partook of flesh on a day when others abstained from it, because he was a Christian. They transgress the landmarks therefore when they curse the soul that tastes flesh in Lent. There were two fathers, (*a*) of whom one said, that a monk who labours not with his hands is on a level with a cheat or a robber; and the other, that it is unlawful for monks to live on what is not their own, notwithstanding their assiduity in contemplations, studies, and prayers; and they have transgressed this landmark by placing the idle and distended carcasses of monks in cells and brothels, to be pam-

(*v*) 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23. (*w*) Prov. xxii. 28. (*z*) Psalm xlv. 10.

(*y*) Acat. in lib. 11. cap. 16. Trip. Hist. Amb. lib. 2. de Off. c. 28

(*z*) Spiridon. Trip. Hist. lib. 1. c. 10.

(*a*) Trip. Hist. lib. 8. c. 1. August. de Opere Mon. c. 17.

pered on the substance of others. There was a father (*b*) who said, that to see a painted image of Christ, or of any saint, in the temples of Christians, is a dreadful abomination. Nor was this merely the sentence of an individual; it was also decreed by an ecclesiastical council, that the object of worship should not be painted on the walls. They are far from confining themselves within these landmarks, for every corner is filled with images. Another father (*c*) has advised that, after having discharged the office of humanity towards the dead by the rites of sepulture, we should leave them to their repose. They break through these landmarks by inculcating a constant solicitude for the dead. There was one of the fathers (*d*) who asserted that the substance of bread and wine in the eucharist ceases not, but remains, just as the substance of the human nature remains in the Lord Christ united with the divine. They transgress this landmark therefore by pretending that, on the words of the Lord being recited, the substance of bread and wine ceases, and is transubstantiated into his body and blood. There were fathers (*e*) who, while they exhibited to the universal Church only one eucharist, and forbade all scandalous and immoral persons to approach it, at the same time severely censured all who, when present, did not partake of it. How far have they removed these landmarks, when they fill not only the churches, but even private houses, with their masses, admit all who choose to be spectators of them, and every one the more readily in proportion to the magnitude of his contribution, however chargeable with impurity and wickedness! They invite none to faith in Christ and a faithful participation of the sacraments; but rather for purposes of gain bring forward their own work instead of the grace and merit of Christ. There were two fathers, (*f*) of whom one contended that the use of Christ's sacred supper should be wholly forbidden to those who, content with partaking of one kind, abstained from the other; the other strenuously maintained that Christian people ought not to be refused the blood of their Lord, for the confession of whom they are required to shed their own. These landmarks also

(*b*) Epiph. Epist. ab. Hier. vers. Con. Eliber. c. 36. (*c*) Amb. de Abra. lib. 1. c. 7.

(*d*) Gelas. Pap. in Conc. Rom.

(*e*) Chrys. in 1 Cap. Ephes. Calix. Papa de Cons. dist. 2.

(*f*) Gelas. can. Comperimus de Cons. dist. 2. Cypr. Epist. 2. lib. 1, de Laps.

they have removed, in appointing, by an inviolable law, that very thing which the former punished with excommunication, and the latter gave a powerful reason for disapproving. There was a father (*g*) who asserted the temerity of deciding on either side of an obscure subject, without clear and evident testimonies of Scripture. This landmark they forgot when they made so many constitutions, canons, and judicial determinations, without any authority from the word of God. There was a father (*h*) who upbraided Montanus with having, among other heresies, been the first imposer of laws for the observance of fasts. They have gone far beyond this landmark also, in establishing fasts by the strictest laws. There was a father (*i*) who denied that marriage ought to be forbidden to the ministers of the Church, and pronounced cohabitation with a wife to be real chastity; and there were fathers who assented to his judgment. They have transgressed these landmarks by enjoining on their priests the strictest celibacy. There was a father who thought that attention should be paid to Christ only, of whom it is said, "Hear ye him," and that no regard should be had to what others before us have either said or done, only to what has been commanded by Christ, who is preëminent over all. This landmark they neither prescribe to themselves, nor permit to be observed by others, when they set up over themselves and others any masters rather than Christ. There was a father (*k*) who contended that the Church ought not to take the precedence of Christ, because his judgment is always according to truth; but ecclesiastical judges, like other men, may generally be deceived. Breaking down this landmark also, they scruple not to assert, that all the authority of the Scripture depends on the decision of the Church. All the fathers, with one heart and voice, have declared it execrable and detestable for the holy word of God to be contaminated with the subtleties of sophists, and perplexed by the wrangles of logicians. Do they confine themselves within these landmarks, when the whole business of their lives is to involve the simplicity of the Scripture in endless controversies, and worse

(*g*) August. lib. 2. de Pec. Mer. cap. ult.

(*h*) Apollon. de quo Eccl. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 11, 12.

(*i*) Paphnut. Trip. Hist. lib. 2. c. 14. Cypr. Epist. 2. lib. 2.

(*k*) Aug. cap. 2. contr. Cresc. Grammatic.

than sophistical wrangles? so that if the fathers were now restored to life, and heard this art of wrangling, which they call speculative divinity, they would not suspect the dispute to have the least reference to God. But if I would enumerate all the instances in which the authority of the fathers is insolently rejected by those who would be thought their dutiful children, my address would exceed all reasonable bounds. Months and years would be insufficient for me. And yet such is their consummate and incorrigible impudence, they dare to censure us for presuming to transgress the ancient landmarks.

Nor can they gain any advantage against us by their argument from custom; for, if we were compelled to submit to custom, we should have to complain of the greatest injustice. Indeed, if the judgments of men were correct, custom should be sought among the good. But the fact is often very different. What appears to be practised by many soon obtains the force of a custom. And human affairs have scarcely ever been in so good a state as for the majority to be pleased with things of real excellence. From the private vices of multitudes, therefore, has arisen public error, or rather a common agreement of vices, which these good men would now have to be received as law. It is evident to all who can see, that the world is inundated with more than an ocean of evils, that it is overrun with numerous destructive pests, that every thing is fast verging to ruin, so that we must altogether despair of human affairs, or vigorously and even violently oppose such immense evils. And the remedy is rejected for no other reason, but because we have been accustomed to the evils so long. But let public error be tolerated in human society; in the kingdom of God nothing but his eternal truth should be heard and regarded, which no succession of years, no custom, no confederacy, can circumscribe. Thus Isaiah once taught the chosen people of God: "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all to whom this people shall say, A confederacy;" that is, that they should not unite in the wicked consent of the people; "nor fear their fear, nor be afraid," but rather "sanctify the Lord of hosts," that he might "be their fear and their dread." (1) Now, therefore, let them, if they please, object against us past ages and present examples; if we "sanctify the Lord of hosts,"

(1) Isaiah viii. 12, 13.

we shall not be much afraid. For, whether many ages agree in similar impiety, he is mighty to take vengeance on the third and fourth generation ; or whether the whole world combine in the same iniquity, he has given an example of the fatal end of those who sin with a multitude, by destroying all men with a deluge, and preserving Noah and his small family, in order that his individual faith might condemn the whole world. Lastly, a corrupt custom is nothing but an epidemical pestilence, which is equally fatal to its objects, though they fall with a multitude. Besides, they ought to consider a remark, somewhere made by Cyprian, (*m*) that persons who sin through ignorance, though they cannot be wholly exculpated, may yet be considered in some degree excusable ; but those who obstinately reject the truth offered by the Divine goodness, are without any excuse at all.

Nor are we so embarrassed by their dilemma as to be obliged to confess, either that the Church was for some time extinct, or that we have now a controversy with the Church. The Church of Christ has lived, and will continue to live, as long as Christ shall reign at the right hand of the Father, by whose hand she is sustained, by whose protection she is defended, by whose power she is preserved in safety. For he will undoubtedly perform what he once promised, to be with his people "even to the end of the world." (*n*) We have no quarrel against the Church, for with one consent we unite with all the company of the faithful in worshipping and adoring the one God and Christ the Lord, as he has been adored by all the pious in all ages. But our opponents deviate widely from the truth when they acknowledge no Church but what is visible to the corporeal eye, and endeavour to circumscribe it by those limits within which it is far from being included. Our controversy turns on the two following points : — first, they contend that the form of the Church is always apparent and visible ; secondly, they place that form in the see of the Roman Church and her order of prelates. We assert, on the contrary, first, that the Church may exist without any visible form ; secondly, that its form is not contained in that external splendour which they fool-

(*m*) Epist. 3. lib. 2. et in Epist. ad Julian. de Hæret. baptiz.

(*n*) Matt. xxviii. 20.

ishly admire, but is distinguished by a very different criterion, *viz.* the pure preaching of God's word, and the legitimate administration of the sacraments. They are not satisfied unless the Church can always be pointed out with the finger. But how often among the Jewish people was it so disorganized, as to have no visible form left? What splendid form do we suppose could be seen, when Elias deplored his being left alone? (o) How long, after the coming of Christ, did it remain without any external form? How often, since that time, have wars, seditions, and heresies, oppressed and totally obscured it? If they had lived at that period, would they have believed that any Church existed? Yet Elias was informed that there were "left seven thousand" who had "not bowed the knee to Baal." Nor should we entertain any doubt of Christ's having always reigned on earth ever since his ascension to heaven. But if the pious at such periods had sought for any form evident to their senses, must not their hearts have been quite discouraged? Indeed it was already considered by Hilary in his day as a grievous error, that people were absorbed in foolish admiration of the episcopal dignity, and did not perceive the dreadful mischiefs concealed under that disguise. For this is his language: (p) "One thing I advise you — beware of Antichrist, for you have an improper attachment to walls; your veneration for the Church of God is misplaced on houses and buildings; you wrongly introduce under them the name of peace. Is there any doubt that they will be seats of Antichrist? I think mountains, woods, and lakes, prisons and whirlpools, less dangerous; for these were the scenes of retirement or banishment in which the prophets prophesied." But what excites the veneration of the multitude in the present day for their horned bishops, but the supposition that those are the holy prelates of religion whom they see presiding over great cities? Away, then, with such stupid admiration. Let us rather leave it to the Lord, since he alone "knoweth them that are his," (q) sometimes to remove from human observation all external knowledge of his Church. I admit this to be a dreadful judgment of God on the earth; but if it be deserved by the impiety of men, why do we attempt to resist the righteous vengeance of God? Thus the Lord punished the ingrati-

(o) 1 Kings xix. 14, 18.

(p) Contr. Auxent.

(q) 2 Tim. ii. 19.

tude of men in former ages ; for, in consequence of their resistance to his truth, and extinction of the light he had given them, he permitted them to be blinded by sense, deluded by absurd falsehoods, and immersed in profound darkness, so that there was no appearance of the true Church left ; yet, at the same time, in the midst of darkness and errors, he preserved his scattered and concealed people from total destruction. Nor is this to be wondered at ; for he knew how to save in all the confusion of Babylon, and the flame of the fiery furnace. But how dangerous it is to estimate the form of the Church by I know not what vain pomp, which they contend for ; I shall rather briefly suggest than state at large, lest I should protract this discourse to an excessive length. The Pope, they say, who holds the Apostolic see, and the bishops anointed and consecrated by him, provided they are equipped with mitres and crosiers, represent the Church, and ought to be considered as the Church. Therefore they cannot err. How is this ? — Because they are pastors of the Church, and consecrated to the Lord. And did not the pastoral character belong to Aaron, and the other rulers of Israel ? Yet Aaron and his sons, after their designation to the priesthood, fell into error when they made the golden calf. (*r*) According to this mode of reasoning, why should not the four hundred prophets, who lied to Ahab, have represented the Church ? (*s*) But the Church remained on the side of Micaiah, solitary and despised as he was, and out of his mouth proceeded the truth. Did not those prophets exhibit both the name and appearance of the Church, who with united violence rose up against Jeremiah, and threatened and boasted, “the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet” ? (*t*) Jeremiah is sent singly against the whole multitude of prophets, with a denunciation from the Lord, that the “law shall perish from the priest, counsel from the wise, and the word from the prophet.” (*v*) And was there not the like external respectability in the council convened by the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, to consult about putting Christ to death ? (*w*) Now, let them go and adhere to the external appearance, and thereby make Christ and all the prophets schismatics, and, on the other

(*r*) Exod. xxxii. 4. (*s*) 1 Kings xxii. 6, 11—23. (*t*) Jer. xviii. 18.

(*v*) Jer. iv. 9.

(*w*) Matt. xxvi. 3, 4.

hand, make the ministers of Satan instruments of the Holy Spirit. But if they speak their real sentiments, let them answer me sincerely, what nation or place they consider as the seat of the Church, from the time when, by a decree of the council of Basil, Eugenius was deposed and degraded from the pontificate, and Amadeus substituted in his place. They cannot deny that the council, as far as relates to external forms, was a lawful one, and summoned not only by one pope, but by two. There Eugenius was pronounced guilty of schism, rebellion, and obstinacy, together with all the host of cardinals and bishops who had joined him in attempting a dissolution of the council. Yet afterwards, assisted by the favour of princes, he regained the quiet possession of his former dignity. That election of Amadeus, though formally made by the authority of a general and holy synod, vanished into smoke; and he was appeased with a cardinal's hat, like a barking dog with a morsel. From the bosom of those heretics and rebels have proceeded all the popes, cardinals, bishops, abbots, and priests, ever since. Here they must stop. For to which party will they give the title of the Church? Will they deny that this was a general council, which wanted nothing to complete its external majesty, being solemnly convened by two papal bulls, consecrated by a presiding legate of the Roman see, and well regulated in every point of order, and invariably preserving the same dignity to the last? Will they acknowledge Eugenius to be a schismatic, with all his adherents, by whom they have all been consecrated? Either, therefore, let them give a different definition of the form of the Church, or, whatever be their number, we shall account them all schismatics, as having been knowingly and voluntarily ordained by heretics. But if it had never been ascertained before, that the Church is not confined to external pomps, they would themselves afford us abundant proof of it, who have so long superciliously exhibited themselves to the world under the title of the Church, though they were at the same time the deadly plagues of it. I speak not of their morals, and those tragical exploits with which all their lives abound, since they profess themselves to be Pharisees, who are to be heard and not imitated. I refer to the very doctrine itself, on which they found their claim to be considered as the Church. If you devote a portion of your leisure, Sire,

to the perusal of our writings, you will clearly discover that doctrine to be a fatal pestilence of souls, the firebrand, ruin, and destruction of the Church.

Finally, they betray great want of candour, by invidiously repeating what great commotions, tumults, and contentions, have attended the preaching of our doctrine, and what effects it produces in many persons. For it is unfair to charge it with those evils which ought to be attributed to the malice of Satan. It is the native property of the Divine word, never to make its appearance without disturbing Satan, and rousing his opposition. This is the most certain and unequivocal criterion by which it is distinguished from false doctrines, which are easily broached when they are heard with general attention, and received with applauses by the world. Thus, in some ages, when all things were immersed in profound darkness, the prince of this world amused and diverted himself with the generality of mankind, and, like another Sardanapalus, gave himself up to his ease and pleasures in perfect peace; for what would he do but amuse and divert himself, in the quiet and undisturbed possession of his kingdom? But when the light shining from above dissipated a portion of his darkness — when that Mighty One alarmed and assaulted his kingdom — then he began to shake off his wonted torpor, and to hurry on his armour. First, indeed, he stirred up the power of men to suppress the truth by violence at its first appearance; and when this proved ineffectual, he had recourse to subtlety. He made the Catabaptists, and other infamous characters, the instruments of exciting dissensions and doctrinal controversies, with a view to obscure and finally to extinguish it. And now he continues to attack it in both ways; for he endeavours to root up this genuine seed by means of human force, and at the same time tries every effort to choke it with his tares, that it may not grow and produce fruit. But all his attempts will be vain, if we attend to the admonitions of the Lord, who hath long ago made us acquainted with his devices, that we might not be caught by him unawares, and has armed us with sufficient means of defence against all his assaults. But to charge the word of God with the odium of seditions, excited against it by wicked and rebellious men, or of sects raised by impostors, — is not this extreme malignity? Yet it is not without example in

former times. Elias was asked whether it was not he "that troubled Israel." (x) Christ was represented by the Jews as guilty of sedition. (y) The apostles were accused of stirring up popular commotions. (z) Wherein does this differ from the conduct of those who, at the present day, impute to us all the disturbances, tumults, and contentions, that break out against us? But the proper answer to such accusations has been taught us by Elias, that the dissemination of errors and the raising of tumults is not chargeable on us, but on those who are resisting the power of God. But as this one reply is sufficient to repress their temerity, so, on the other hand, we must meet the weakness of some persons, who are frequently disturbed with such offences, and become unsettled and wavering in their minds. Now, that they may not stumble and fall amidst this agitation and perplexity, let them know that the apostles in their day experienced the same things that now befall us. There were "unlearned and unstable" men, Peter says, who "wrested" the inspired writings of Paul "to their own destruction." (a) There were despisers of God, who, when they heard that "where sin abounded grace did much more abound," immediately concluded, Let us "continue in sin, that grace may abound." When they heard that the faithful were "not under the law," they immediately croaked, "We will sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace." (b) There were some who accused him as an encourager of sin. Many false apostles crept in, to destroy the churches he had raised. "Some preached" the gospel "of envy and strife, not in sincerity," maliciously "supposing to add affliction to his bonds." (c) In some places the Gospel was attended with little benefit. "All were seeking their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." (d) Others returned "like dogs to their vomit, and like swine to their wallowing in the mire." (e) Many perverted the liberty of the spirit into the licentiousness of the flesh. Many insinuated themselves as brethren, who afterwards brought the pious into dangers. Various contentions were excited among the brethren themselves. What was to be done by the apostles in such circumstances? Should they not have dissembled for a time, or

(x) 1 Kings xviii. 17. (y) Luke xxiii. 2, 5. (z) Acts xvii. 6. xxiv. 5.

(a) 2 Pet. iii. 16. (b) Rom. v. 20. vi. 1, 14, 15. (c) Phil. i. 15, 16.

(d) Phil. ii. 21.

(e) 2 Pet. ii. 22.

rather have rejected and deserted that Gospel which appeared to be the nursery of so many disputes, the cause of so many dangers, the occasion of so many offences? But in such difficulties as these, their minds were relieved by this reflection, that Christ is the "stone of stumbling and rock of offence," (*f*) "set for the fall and rising again of many, and for a sign which shall be spoken against;" (*g*) and armed with this confidence, they proceeded boldly through all the dangers of tumults and offences. The same consideration should support us, since Paul declares it to be the perpetual character of the Gospel, that it is "a savour of death unto death in them that perish," (*h*) although it was rather given us to be the "savour of life unto life," and "the power of God to" the "salvation" of the faithful; (*i*) which we also should certainly experience it to be, if we did not corrupt this eminent gift of God by our ingratitude, and pervert to our destruction what ought to be a principal instrument of our salvation.

But I return to you, Sire. Let not your Majesty be at all moved by those groundless accusations with which our adversaries endeavour to terrify you; as that the sole tendency and design of this new Gospel — for so they call it — is to furnish a pretext for seditions, and to gain impunity for all crimes. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace;" (*k*) nor is "the Son of God," who came to "destroy the works of the devil, the minister of sin." (*l*) And it is unjust to charge us with such motives and designs, of which we have never given cause for the least suspicion. Is it probable that we are meditating the subversion of kingdoms? — we, who were never heard to utter a factious word, whose lives were ever known to be peaceable and honest while we lived under your government, and who, even now in our exile, cease not to pray for all prosperity to attend yourself and your kingdom! Is it probable that we are seeking an unlimited license to commit crimes with impunity? in whose conduct, though many things may be blamed, yet there is nothing worthy of such severe reproach! Nor have we, by Divine Grace, profited so little in the Gospel, but that our life may be an example to our detractors of chastity, liberality, mercy, temperance, patience,

(*f*) 1 Pet. ii. 8.(*h*) 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.(*k*) 1 Cor. xiv. 33.(*g*) Luke ii. 34.(*i*) Rom. i. 16.(*l*) 1 John iii. 8. Gal. ii. 17.

modesty, and every other virtue. It is an undeniable fact, that we sincerely fear and worship God, whose name we desire to be sanctified both by our life and by our death; and envy itself is constrained to bear testimony to the innocence and civil integrity of some of us, who have suffered the punishment of death for that very thing which ought to be accounted their highest praise. * But if the Gospel be made a pretext for tumults, which has not yet happened in your kingdom; if any persons make the liberty of divine grace an excuse for the licentiousness of their vices, of whom I have known many, — there are laws and legal penalties, by which they may be punished according to their deserts; only let not the Gospel of God be reproached for the crimes of wicked men. You have now, Sire, the virulent iniquity of our calumniators laid before you in a sufficient number of instances, that you may not receive their accusations with too credulous an ear. — I fear I have gone too much into the detail, as this preface already approaches the size of a full apology; whereas I intended it not to contain our defence, but only to prepare your mind to attend to the pleading of our cause; for, though you are now averse and alienated from us, and even inflamed against us, we despair not of regaining your favour, if you will only once read with calmness and composure this our confession, which we intend as our defence before your Majesty. But, on the contrary, if your ears are so preoccupied with the whispers of the malevolent, as to leave no opportunity for the accused to speak for themselves, and if those outrageous furies, with your connivance, continue to persecute with imprisonments, scourges, tortures, confiscations, and flames, we shall indeed, like sheep destined to the slaughter, be reduced to the greatest extremities. Yet shall we in patience possess our souls, and wait for the mighty hand of the Lord, which undoubtedly will in time appear, and show itself armed for the deliverance of the poor from their affliction, and for the punishment of their despisers, who now exult in such perfect security. May the Lord, the King of kings, establish your throne with righteousness, and your kingdom with equity.

BASIL, 1st August, 1536.

GENERAL SYLLABUS.

THE design of the Author in these Christian Institutes is twofold, relating, First, to the knowledge of God, as the way to attain a blessed immortality; and, in connection with and subservience to this, Secondly, to the knowledge of ourselves.

In the prosecution of this design, he strictly follows the method of the Apostles' Creed, as being most familiar to all Christians. For as the Creed consists of four parts, the first relating to God the Father, the second to the Son, the third to the Holy Spirit, the fourth to the Church; so the Author distributes the whole of this work into Four Books, corresponding respectively to the four parts of the Creed; as will clearly appear from the following detail:—

I. The first article of the Creed relates to God the Father, and to the creation, conservation, and government of all things, which are included in his omnipotence.

So the first book is on the knowledge of God, considered as the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the universe at large, and of every thing contained in it. It shows both the nature and tendency of the true knowledge of the Creator—that this is not learned in the schools, but that every man from his birth is self-taught it—Yet that the depravity of men is so great as to corrupt and extinguish this knowledge, partly by ignorance, partly by wickedness; so that it neither leads him to glorify God as he ought, nor conducts him to the attainment of happiness—And though this internal knowledge is assisted by all the creatures around, which serve as a mirror to display the Divine perfections, yet that man does not profit by it—Therefore, that to those, whom it is God's will to bring to an intimate and saving knowledge of himself, he gives his written word; which introduces observations on the sacred Scripture—That he has therein revealed himself; that not the Father only, but the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, uni-

ted, is the Creator of heaven and earth; whom neither the knowledge innate by nature, nor the very beautiful mirror displayed to us in the world, can, in consequence of our depravity, teach us to know so as to glorify him. This gives occasion for treating of the revelation of God in the Scripture, of the unity of the Divine Essence, and the trinity of Persons. — To prevent man from attributing to God the blame of his own voluntary blindness, the Author shows the state of man at his creation, and treats of the image of God, free-will, and the primitive integrity of nature. — Having finished the subject of creation, he proceeds to the conservation and government of all things, concluding the first book with a full discussion of the doctrine of divine providence.

II. But since man is fallen by sin from the state in which he was created, it is necessary to come to Christ. Therefore it follows in the Creed, “And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,” &c.

So in the second book of the Institutes our Author treats of the knowledge of God as the Redeemer in Christ; and having shown the fall of man, leads him to Christ the Mediator. Here he states the doctrine of original sin—that man possesses no inherent strength to enable him to deliver himself from sin and the impending curse, but that, on the contrary, nothing can proceed from him, antecedently to reconciliation and renovation, but what is deserving of condemnation—Therefore, that, man being utterly lost in himself, and incapable of conceiving even a good thought by which he may restore himself, or perform actions acceptable to God, he must seek redemption out of himself, in Christ—That the Law was given for this purpose, not to confine its observers to itself, but to conduct them to Christ; which gives occasion to introduce an exposition of the Moral Law—That he was known, as the Author of salvation, to the Jews under the Law, but more fully under the Gospel, in which he is manifested to the world.—Hence follows the doctrine of the similarity and difference of the Old and New Testament, of the Law and Gospel.—It is next stated, that, in order to the complete accomplishment of salvation, it was necessary for the eternal Son of God to become man, and that he actually assumed a real human nature:—it is also shown how these two natures constitute one per-

son — That the office of Christ, appointed for the acquisition and application of complete salvation by his merit and efficacy, is sacerdotal, regal, and prophetic. — Next follows the manner in which Christ executed his office, or actually performed the part of a Mediator, being an exposition of the Articles respecting his death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. — Lastly, the Author shows the truth and propriety of affirming that Christ merited the grace of God and salvation for us.

III. As long as Christ is separate from us, he profits us nothing. Hence the necessity of our being ingrafted into him, as branches into a vine. Therefore the doctrine concerning Christ is followed, in the third part of the Creed, by this clause, "I believe in the Holy Spirit," as being the bond of union between us and Christ.

So in the third book our Author treats of the Holy Spirit, who unites us to Christ — and consequently of faith, by which we embrace Christ, with his twofold benefit, free righteousness; which he imputes to us, and regeneration, which he commences within us, by bestowing repentance upon us. — And to show that we have not the least room to glory in such faith as is unconnected with the pursuit of repentance, before proceeding to the full discussion of justification, he treats at large of repentance and the continual exercise of it, which Christ, apprehended by faith, produces in us by his Spirit. — He next fully discusses the first and chief benefit of Christ when united to us by the Holy Spirit, that is, justification — and then treats of prayer, which resembles the hand that actually receives those blessings to be enjoyed, which faith knows, from the word of promise, to be laid up with God for our use. — But as all men are not united to Christ, the sole Author of salvation, by the Holy Spirit, who creates and preserves faith in us, he treats of God's eternal election; which is the cause that we, in whom he foresaw no good but what he intended freely to bestow, have been favoured with the gift of Christ, and united to God by the effectual call of the Gospel. — Lastly, he treats of complete regeneration, and the fruition of happiness; that is, the final resurrection, towards which our eyes must be directed, since in this world the felicity of the pious, in respect of enjoyment, is only begun.

IV. But as the Holy Spirit does not unite all men to Christ,

or make them partakers of faith, and on those to whom he imparts it he does not ordinarily bestow it without means, but employs for this purpose the preaching of the Gospel and the use of the sacraments, with the administration of all discipline, therefore it follows in the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," whom, though involved in eternal death, yet, in pursuance of the gratuitous election, God has freely reconciled to himself in Christ, and made partakers of the Holy Spirit, that, being ingrafted into Christ, they may have communion with him as their head, whence flows a perpetual remission of sins, and a full restoration to eternal life.

So in the fourth book our Author treats of the Church — then of the means used by the Holy Spirit in effectually calling from spiritual death, and preserving the church — the word and sacraments — baptism and the Lord's supper — which are as it were Christ's regal sceptre, by which he commences his spiritual reign in the Church by the energy of his Spirit, and carries it forwards from day to day during the present life, after the close of which he perfects it without those means.

And as political institutions are the asylums of the Church in this life, though civil government is distinct from the spiritual kingdom of Christ, our Author instructs us respecting it as a signal blessing of God, which the Church ought to acknowledge with gratitude of heart, till we are called out of this transitory state to the heavenly inheritance, where God will be all in all.

This is the plan of the Institutes, which may be comprised in the following brief summary : —

Man, created originally upright, being afterwards ruined, not partially, but totally, finds salvation out of himself, wholly in Christ ; to whom being united by the Holy Spirit, freely bestowed, without any regard of future works, he enjoys in him a twofold benefit, the perfect imputation of righteousness, which attends him to the grave, and the commencement of sanctification, which he daily increases, till at length he completes it at the day of regeneration or resurrection of the body, so that in eternal life and the heavenly inheritance his praises are celebrated for such stupendous mercy.

INSTITUTES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BOOK I.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE CREATOR.

ARGUMENT.

THE first book treats of the knowledge of God the Creator ; but, this being chiefly manifested in the creation of man, man also is made the subject of discussion. Thus the principal topics of the whole treatise are two — the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of man. In the first chapter, they are considered together ; in the following chapters, separately ; yet some things are introduced, which may be referred to either or both. What respects the Scripture and images may belong to the knowledge of God ; what respects the formation of the world, the holy angels, and the devils, to the knowledge of man ; and what respects the manner in which God governs the world, to both.

On the first of these topics, the knowledge of God, this book shows, First, What kind of knowledge God himself requires—Chap. II.

Secondly, Where it must be sought—Chap. III.—IX., as follows :

1. Not in man ; because, though the human mind is naturally endued with it, yet it is extinguished, partly by ignorance, partly by wickedness—Chap. III. IV.
2. Nor in the structure of the world ; because, though it shines there with the brightest evidence, testimonies of that kind, however plain, are, through our stupidity, wholly useless to us—Chap. V.
3. But in the Scripture—Chap. VI.—IX.

Thirdly, What kind of a being God is—Chap. X.

Fourthly, The impiety of ascribing to God a visible form, with observations on the adoration and origin of images—Chap. XI.

Fifthly, The reasonableness that God alone should be supremely worshipped—Chap. XII.

Lastly, The unity of the Divine Essence, and the distinction of three Persons—Chap. XIII.

On the other of these topics, the knowledge of man, it contains,

First, A dissertation on the creation of the world, and on the good and evil angels, all which relate to man—Chap. XIV.

Secondly, Proceeding to man himself, an examination of his nature and powers—Chap. XV.

But, in order to a clearer illustration of the knowledge of God and man, the three remaining chapters treat of the government of all human actions and of the whole world, in opposition to fortune and fate, stating the pure doctrine, and showing its use; and conclude with proving that, though God uses the agency of the wicked, he is pure from all pollution, and chargeable with no blame.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES.

TRUE and substantial wisdom principally consists of two parts, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves. But, while these two branches of knowledge are so intimately connected, which of them precedes and produces the other, is not easy to discover. For, in the first place, no man can take a survey of himself but he must immediately turn to the contemplation of God, in whom he “lives and moves;” (*a*) since it is evident that the talents which we possess are not from ourselves, and that our very existence is nothing but a subsistence in God alone. These bounties, distilling to us by drops from heaven, form, as it were, so many streams conducting us to the fountain-head. Our poverty conduces to a clearer display of the infinite fulness of God. Especially, the miserable ruin, into which we have been plunged by the defection of the first man, compels us to raise our eyes towards heaven, not only as hungry and famished, to seek thence a supply for our wants,

(*a*) Acts xvii. 2.

but, aroused with fear, to learn humility. For, since man is subject to a world of miseries, and has been spoiled of his divine array, this melancholy exposure discovers an immense mass of deformity : every one, therefore, must be so impressed with a consciousness of his own infelicity, as to arrive at some knowledge of God. Thus a sense of our ignorance, vanity, poverty, infirmity, depravity, and corruption, leads us to perceive and acknowledge that in the Lord alone are to be found true wisdom, solid strength, perfect goodness, and unspotted righteousness ; and so, by our imperfections, we are excited to a consideration of the perfections of God. Nor can we really aspire toward him, till we have begun to be displeased with ourselves. For who would not gladly rest satisfied with himself? where is the man not actually absorbed in self-complacency, while he remains unacquainted with his true situation, or content with his own endowments, and ignorant or forgetful of his own misery? The knowledge of ourselves, therefore, is not only an incitement to seek after God, but likewise a considerable assistance towards finding him.

II. On the other hand, it is plain that no man can arrive at the true knowledge of himself, without having first contemplated the divine character, and then descended to the consideration of his own. For, such is the native pride of us all, we invariably esteem ourselves righteous, innocent, wise, and holy, till we are convinced, by clear proofs, of our unrighteousness, turpitude, folly, and impurity. But we are never thus convinced, while we confine our attention to ourselves, and regard not the Lord, who is the only standard by which this judgment ought to be formed. Because, from our natural proneness to hypocrisy, any vain appearance of righteousness abundantly contents us instead of the reality ; and, every thing within and around us being exceedingly defiled, we are delighted with what is least so, as extremely pure, while we confine our reflections within the limits of human corruption. So the eye, accustomed to see nothing but black, judges that to be very white, which is but whitish, or perhaps brown. Indeed, the senses of our bodies may assist us in discovering how grossly we err in estimating the powers of the soul. For if at noon-day we look either on the ground, or at any surrounding objects, we conclude our vision to be very strong and piercing ; but when we raise our eyes and steadily look at the sun, they are at once dazzled and confounded with such a blaze of brightness, and we are constrained to confess, that our sight, so piercing in viewing terrestrial things, when directed to the sun, is dimness itself. Thus also it happens in the consideration of our spiritual endowments. For as long as our views are bounded by the earth, perfectly content with our own

righteousness, wisdom, and strength, we fondly flatter ourselves, and fancy we are little less than demigods. But, if we once elevate our thoughts to God, and consider his nature, and the consummate perfection of his righteousness, wisdom, and strength, to which we ought to be conformed, — what before charmed us in ourselves under the false pretext of righteousness, will soon be loathed as the greatest iniquity; what strangely deceived us under the title of wisdom, will be despised as extreme folly; and what wore the appearance of strength, will be proved to be most wretched impotence. So very remote from the divine purity is what seems in us the highest perfection.

III. Hence that horror and amazement with which the Scripture always represents the saints to have been impressed and disturbed, on every discovery of the presence of God. For when we see those, who before his appearance stood secure and firm, so astonished and affrighted at the manifestation of his glory, as to faint and almost expire through fear, — we must infer that man is never sufficiently affected with a knowledge of his own meanness, till he has compared himself with the Divine Majesty. Of this consternation we have frequent examples in the Judges and Prophets; so that it was a common expression among the Lord's people — "We shall die, because we have seen God." (*b*) Therefore the history of Job, to humble men with a consciousness of their pollution, impotence, and folly, derives its principal argument from a description of the Divine purity, power, and wisdom. And not without reason. For we see how Abraham, the nearer he approached to behold the glory of the Lord, the more fully acknowledged himself to be but "dust and ashes;" (*c*) and how Elias (*d*) could not bear his approach without covering his face, his appearance is so formidable. And what can man do, all vile and corrupt, when fear constrains even the cherubim themselves to veil their faces? This is what the prophet Isaiah speaks of — "the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign:" (*e*) that is, when he shall make a fuller and nearer exhibition of his splendour, it shall eclipse the splendour of the brightest object besides. But, though the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves be intimately connected, the proper order of instruction requires us first to treat of the former, and then to proceed to the discussion of the latter.

(*b*) Judg. xiii. 22.
(*c*) Gen. xviii. 27.

(*d*) 1 Kings xix. 13.
(*e*) Isaiah vi. 2; xxiv. 23.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE AND TENDENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

By the knowledge of God, I intend not merely a notion that there is such a Being, but also an acquaintance with whatever we ought to know concerning Him, conducing to his glory and our benefit. For we cannot with propriety say, there is any knowledge of God where there is no religion or piety. I have no reference here to that species of knowledge by which men, lost and condemned in themselves, apprehend God the Redeemer in Christ the Mediator; but only to that first and simple knowledge, to which the genuine order of nature would lead us, if Adam had retained his innocence. For though, in the present ruined state of human nature, no man will ever perceive God to be a Father, or the Author of salvation, or in any respect propitious, but as pacified by the mediation of Christ; yet it is one thing to understand, that God our Maker supports us by his power, governs us by his providence, nourishes us by his goodness, and follows us with blessings of every kind, and another to embrace the grace of reconciliation proposed to us in Christ. Therefore, since God is first manifested, both in the structure of the world and in the general tenor of Scripture, simply as the Creator, and afterwards reveals himself in the person of Christ as a Redeemer, hence arises a twofold knowledge of him; of which the former is first to be considered, and the other will follow in its proper place. For though our mind cannot conceive of God, without ascribing some worship to him, it will not be sufficient merely to apprehend that he is the only proper object of universal worship and adoration, unless we are also persuaded that he is the fountain of all good, and seek for none but in him. This I maintain, not only because he sustains the universe, as he once made it, by his infinite power, governs it by his wisdom, preserves it by his goodness, and especially reigns over the human race in righteousness and judgment, exercising a merciful forbearance, and defending them by his protection; but because there cannot be found the least particle of wisdom, light, righteousness, power, rectitude, or sincere truth which does not proceed from him, and claim him for its author: we should therefore learn to expect and supplicate all these things from him, and thankfully to acknowledge what he gives us. For this sense of the divine perfections is calculated to teach us piety, which produces religion. By piety, I mean a reverence and love of God,

arising from a knowledge of his benefits. For, till men are sensible that they owe every thing to God, that they are supported by his paternal care, that he is the Author of all the blessings they enjoy, and that nothing should be sought independently of him, they will never voluntarily submit to his authority; they will never truly and cordially devote themselves to his service, unless they rely upon him alone for true felicity.

II. Cold and frivolous, then, are the speculations of those who employ themselves in disquisitions on the essence of God, when it would be more interesting to us to become acquainted with his character, and to know what is agreeable to his nature. For what end is answered by professing, with Epicurus, that there is a God, who, discarding all concern about the world, indulges himself in perpetual inactivity? What benefit arises from the knowledge of a God with whom we have no concern? Our knowledge of God should rather tend, first, to teach us fear and reverence; and, secondly, to instruct us to implore all good at his hand, and to render him the praise of all that we receive. For how can you entertain a thought of God without immediately reflecting, that, being a creature of his formation, you must, by right of creation, be subject to his authority? that you are indebted to him for your life, and that all your actions should be done with reference to him? If this be true, it certainly follows that your life is miserably corrupt, unless it be regulated by a desire of obeying him, since his will ought to be the rule of our conduct. Nor can you have a clear view of him without discovering him to be the fountain and origin of all good. This would produce a desire of union to him, and confidence in him, if the human mind were not seduced by its own depravity from the right path of investigation. For, even at the first, the pious mind dreams not of any imaginary deity, but contemplates only the one true God; and, concerning him, indulges not the fictions of fancy, but, content with believing him to be such as he reveals himself, uses the most diligent and unremitting caution, lest it should fall into error by a rash and presumptuous transgression of his will. He who thus knows him, sensible that all things are subject to his control, confides in him as his Guardian and Protector, and unreservedly commits himself to his care. Assured that he is the author of all blessings, in distress or want he immediately flies to his protection, and expects his aid. Persuaded of his goodness and mercy, he relies on him with unlimited confidence, nor doubts of finding in his clemency a remedy provided for all his evils. Knowing him to be his Lord and Father, he concludes that he ought to mark his government in all things, revere his majesty, endeavour to promote

his glory, and obey his commands. Perceiving him to be a just Judge, armed with severity for the punishment of crimes, he keeps his tribunal always in view, and is restrained by fear from provoking his wrath. Yet he is not so terrified at the apprehension of his justice, as to wish to evade it, even if escape were possible; but loves him as much in punishing the wicked as in blessing the pious, because he believes it as necessary to his glory to punish the impious and abandoned, as to reward the righteous with eternal life. Besides, he restrains himself from sin, not merely from a dread of vengeance, but because he loves and reveres God as his Father, honours and worships him as his Lord, and, even though there were no hell, would shudder at the thought of offending him. See, then, the nature of pure and genuine religion. It consists in faith, united with a serious fear of God, comprehending a voluntary reverence, and producing legitimate worship agreeable to the injunctions of the law. And this requires to be the more carefully remarked, because men in general render to God a formal worship, but very few truly reverence him; while great ostentation in ceremonies is universally displayed, but sincerity of heart is rarely to be found.

CHAPTER III.

THE HUMAN MIND NATURALLY ENDUED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

WE lay it down as a position not to be controverted, that the human mind, even by natural instinct, possesses some sense of a Deity. For that no man might shelter himself under the pretext of ignorance, God hath given to all some apprehension of his existence, (*f*) the memory of which he frequently and insensibly renews; so that, as men universally know that there is a God, and that he is their Maker, they must be condemned by their own testimony, for not having worshipped him and consecrated their lives to his service. If we seek for ignorance of a Deity, it is nowhere more likely to be found, than among tribes the most stupid and furthest from civilization. But, as the celebrated Cicero observes, there is no nation so barbarous, no race so savage, as not to be firmly persuaded of the being of a God. (*g*) Even those who in other respects appear to differ but little from brutes, always

(*f*) Rom. i. 20. (*g*) Cicero. de Natur. Deor. lib. i. Lactant. Inst. lib. iii. cap. 10.

retain some sense of religion ; so fully are the minds of men possessed with this common principle, which is closely interwoven with their original composition. Now, since there has never been a country or family, from the beginning of the world, totally destitute of religion, it is a tacit confession, that some sense of the Divinity is inscribed on every heart. Of this opinion, idolatry itself furnishes ample proof. For we know how reluctantly man would degrade himself to exalt other creatures above him. His preference of worshipping a piece of wood or stone, to being thought to have no god, evinces the impression of a Deity on the human mind to be very strong, the obliteration of which is more difficult than a total change of the natural disposition ; and this is certainly changed, whenever man leaves his natural pride, and voluntarily descends to such meannesses under the notion of worshipping God.

II. It is most absurd, then, to pretend, as is asserted by some, that religion was the contrivance of a few subtle and designing men, a political machine to confine the simple multitude to their duty, while those who inculcated the worship of God on others, were themselves far from believing that any god existed. I confess, indeed, that artful men have introduced many inventions into religion, to fill the vulgar with reverence, and strike them with terror, in order to obtain the greater command over their minds. But this they never could have accomplished, if the minds of men had not previously been possessed of a firm persuasion of the existence of God, from which the propensity to religion proceeds. And that they who cunningly imposed on the illiterate, under the pretext of religion, were themselves wholly destitute of any knowledge of God, is quite incredible. For though there were some in ancient times, and many arise in the present age, who deny the existence of God, yet, in spite of their reluctance, they are continually receiving proofs of what they desire to disbelieve. We read of no one guilty of more audacious or unbridled contempt of the Deity than Caligula ; yet no man ever trembled with greater distress at any instance of Divine wrath, so that he was constrained to dread the Divinity whom he professed to despise. This you may always see exemplified in persons of similar character. For the most audacious contemnors of God are most alarmed, even at the noise of a falling leaf. Whence arises this, but from the vengeance of the Divine Majesty, smiting their consciences the more powerfully in proportion to their efforts to fly from it ? They try every refuge to hide themselves from the Lord's presence, and to efface it from their minds ; but their attempts to elude it are all in vain. Though it may seem to disappear

for a moment, it presently returns with increased violence; so that, if they have any remission of the anguish of conscience, it resembles the sleep of persons intoxicated, or subject to frenzy, who enjoy no placid rest while sleeping, being continually harassed with horrible and tremendous dreams. The impious themselves, therefore, exemplify the observation, that the idea of a God is never lost in the human mind.

III. It will always be evident to persons of correct judgment, that the idea of a Deity impressed on the mind of man is indelible. That all have by nature an innate persuasion of the Divine existence, a persuasion inseparable from their very constitution, we have abundant evidence in the contumacy of the wicked, whose furious struggles to extricate themselves from the fear of God are unavailing. Though Diagoras, and others like him, turn to ridicule what all ages have believed of religion; (*h*) though Dionysius scoff at the judgment of Heaven, — it is but a forced laughter, for the worm of a guilty conscience torments them within, worse than if they were seared with hot irons. I agree not with Cicero, that errors in process of time become obsolete, and that religion is increased and ameliorated daily. For the world, as will shortly be observed, uses its utmost endeavours to banish all knowledge of God, and tries every method of corrupting his worship. I only maintain, that while the stupid insensibility which the wicked wish to acquire, to promote their contempt of God, preys upon their minds, yet the sense of a Deity, which they ardently desire to extinguish, is still strong, and frequently discovers itself. Whence we infer, that this is a doctrine, not first to be learned in the schools, but which every man from his birth is self-taught, and which, though many strain every nerve to banish it from them, yet nature itself permits none to forget. Now, if the end for which all men are born and live, be to know God, — and unless the knowledge of God have reached this point, it is uncertain and vain, — it is evident, that all who direct not every thought and action of life to this end, are degenerated from the law of their creation. Of this the heathen philosophers themselves were not ignorant. This was Plato's meaning, when he taught that the chief good of the soul consists in similitude to God, when the soul, having a clear knowledge of him, is wholly transformed into his likeness. (*i*) The reasoning also of Gryllus, in Plutarch, is very accurate, when he affirms, that men entirely destitute of religion, not only do not excel the brutes, but are in many respects far more wretched, being obnoxious to evil under so many forms, and always dragging on a tumultuous

(*h*) Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* lib. 1 & 3. Valer. Maxim. lib. 1, cap. 1.

(*i*) In *Phæd.* & *Thææt.*

and restless life. The worship of God is therefore the only thing which renders men superior to brutes, and makes them aspire to immortality.

CHAPTER IV.

THIS KNOWLEDGE EXTINGUISHED OR CORRUPTED, PARTLY BY
IGNORANCE, PARTLY BY WICKEDNESS.

WHILE experience testifies that the seeds of religion are sown by God in every heart, we scarcely find one man in a hundred who cherishes what he has received, and not one in whom they grow to maturity, much less bear fruit in due season. Some perhaps grow vain in their own superstitions, while others revolt from God with intentional wickedness; but all degenerate from the true knowledge of him. The fact is, that no genuine piety remains in the world. But, in saying that some fall into superstition through error, I would not insinuate that their ignorance excuses them from guilt; because their blindness is always connected with pride, vanity, and contumacy. Pride and vanity are discovered, when miserable men, in seeking after God, rise not, as they ought, above their own level, but judge of him according to their carnal stupidity, and leave the proper path of investigation in pursuit of speculations as vain as they are curious. Their conceptions of him are formed, not according to the representations he gives of himself, but by the inventions of their own presumptuous imaginations. This gulf being opened, whatever course they take, they must be rushing forwards to destruction. None of their subsequent attempts for the worship or service of God can be considered as rendered to him; because they worship not him, but a figment of their own brains in his stead. This depravity Paul expressly remarks: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (*k*) He had before said, "they became vain in their imaginations." But lest any should exculpate them, he adds that they were deservedly blinded, because, not content within the bounds of sobriety, but arrogating to themselves more than was right, they wilfully darkened, and even infatuated themselves with pride, vanity, and perverseness. Whence it follows, that their folly is inexcusable, which originates not only in a vain curiosity, but in false confidence, and an immoderate desire to exceed the limits of human knowledge.

(*k*) Rom. i. 22.

II. David's assertion, that "the fool hath said in his heart, *(l)* There is no God," is primarily, as we shall soon see in another place, to be restricted to those who extinguish the light of nature, and wilfully stupefy themselves. For we see many, become hardened by bold and habitual transgressions, striving to banish all remembrance of God, which the instinct of nature is still suggesting to their minds. To render their madness more detestable, he introduces them as expressly denying the existence of God; not that they deprive him of his being, but because they rob him of his justice and providence, shutting him up as an idler in heaven. Now, as nothing would be more inconsistent with Deity, than to abandon the government of the world, leave it to fortune, and connive at the crimes of men, that they might wanton with impunity, — whoever extinguishes all fear of the heavenly judgment, and indulges himself in security, denies that there is any God. After the impious have wilfully shut their own eyes, it is the righteous vengeance of God upon them, to darken their understandings, so that, seeing, they may not perceive. *(m)* David is the best interpreter of his own meaning, in another place, where he says, "The wicked have no fear of God before their eyes;" *(n)* and again, that they encourage themselves in their iniquities with the flattering persuasion that God doth not see them. *(o)* Though they are constrained to acknowledge the existence of God, yet they rob him of his glory, by detracting from his power. For as God, according to the testimony of Paul, "cannot deny himself," *(p)* because he perpetually remains like himself, — those who feign him to be a vain and lifeless image, are truly said to deny God. It must also be remarked, that, though they strive against their own natural understanding, and desire not only to banish him thence, but even to annihilate him in heaven, their insensibility can never prevail, so as to prevent God from sometimes recalling them to his tribunal. But as no dread restrains them from violent opposition to the divine will, it is evident, as long as they are carried away with such a blind impetuosity, that they are governed by a brutish forgetfulness of God.

III. Thus is overthrown the vain excuse pleaded by many for their superstition; for they satisfy themselves with any attention to religion, however preposterous, not considering that the Divine Will is the perpetual rule to which true religion ought to be conformed; that God ever continues like himself; that he is no spectre or phantasm, to be metamorphosed according to the fancy of every individual. It is easy to see how superstition mocks God with hypocritical services, while it attempts

(l) Psalm xiv. 1.*(m)* Isaiah vi. 9.*(n)* Psalm xxxvi. 1.*(o)* Psalm x. 11.*(p)* 2 Tim. ii. 13.

to please him. For, embracing only those things which he declares he disregards, it either contemptuously practises, or even openly rejects, what he prescribes and declares to be pleasing in his sight. Persons who introduce newly-invented methods of worshipping God, really worship and adore the creature of their distempered imaginations; for they would never have dared to trifle in such a manner with God, if they had not first feigned a god conformable to their own false and foolish notions. Wherefore the apostle pronounces a vague and unsettled notion concerning the Deity to be ignorance of God. "When ye knew not God, (says he,) ye did service unto them which by nature were no gods." (q) And in another place he speaks of the Ephesians as having been "without God," (r) while they were strangers to a right knowledge of the only true God. Nor, in this respect, is it of much importance, whether you imagine to yourself one god or more; for in either case you depart and revolt from the true God, and, forsaking him, you have nothing left you but an execrable idol. We must therefore decide, with Lactantius, that there is no legitimate religion unconnected with truth.

IV. Another sin is, that they never think of God but against their inclinations, nor approach him till their reluctance is overcome by constraint; and then they are influenced, not by a voluntary fear, proceeding from reverence of the Divine Majesty, but by a servile and constrained fear, extorted by the divine judgment, which they dread because it is inevitable, at the same time that they hate it. Now, to impiety, and to this species of it alone, is applicable that assertion of Statius, that fear first made gods in the world. (s) They, whose minds are alienated from the righteousness of God, earnestly desire the subversion of that tribunal, which they know to be established for the punishment of transgressions against it. With this disposition, they wage war against the Lord, who cannot be deprived of his judgment; but when they apprehend his irresistible arm to be impending over their heads, unable to avert or evade it, they tremble with fear. That they may not seem altogether to despise him, whose majesty troubles them, they practise some form of religion; at the same time not ceasing to pollute themselves with vices of every kind, and to add one flagitious act to another, till they have violated every part of God's holy law, and dissipated all its righteousness. It is certain, at least, that they are not prevented by that pretended fear of God from enjoying pleasure and satisfaction in their sins, practising self-adulation, and preferring the indulgence of their own carnal intemperance to the salutary restraints of the

(q) Gal. iv. 8.

(r) Eph. ii. 12.

(s) Statii Thebaid. lib. 3.

Holy Spirit. But that being a false and vain shadow of religion, and scarcely worthy even to be called its shadow, — it is easy to infer the wide difference between such a confused notion of God, and the piety which is instilled only into the minds of the faithful, and is the source of religion. Yet hypocrites, who are flying from God, resort to the artifices of superstition, for the sake of appearing devoted to him. For whereas the whole tenor of their life ought to be a perpetual course of obedience to him, they make no scruple of rebelling against him in almost all their actions, only endeavouring to appease him with a few paltry sacrifices. Whereas he ought to be served with sanctity of life and integrity of heart, they invent frivolous trifles and worthless observances, to conciliate his favour. They abandon themselves to their impurities with the greater licentiousness, because they confide in being able to discharge all their duty to him by ridiculous expiations. In a word, whereas their confidence ought to be placed on him, they neglect him, and depend upon themselves or on other creatures. At length they involve themselves in such a vast accumulation of errors, that those sparks which enable them to discover the glory of God are smothered, and at last extinguished by the criminal darkness of iniquity. That seed, which it is impossible to eradicate, a sense of the existence of a Deity, yet remains ; but so corrupted as to produce only the worst of fruits. Yet this is a further proof of what I now contend for, that an idea of God is naturally engraved on the hearts of men, since necessity extorts a confession of it, even from reprobates themselves. In the moment of tranquillity, they facetiously mock the Divine Being, and with loquacious impertinence derogate from his power. But if any despair oppress them, it stimulates them to seek him, and dictates concise prayers, which prove that they are not altogether ignorant of God, but that what ought to have appeared before had been suppressed by obstinacy.

CHAPTER V.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD CONSPICUOUS IN THE FORMATION AND CONTINUAL GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.

As the perfection of a happy life consists in the knowledge of God, that no man might be precluded from attaining felicity, God hath not only sown in the minds of men the seed of re-

ligion, already mentioned, but hath manifested himself in the formation of every part of the world, and daily presents himself to public view, in such a manner, that they cannot open their eyes without being constrained to behold him. His essence indeed is incomprehensible, so that his Majesty is not to be perceived by the human senses ; but on all his works he hath inscribed his glory in characters so clear, unequivocal, and striking, that the most illiterate and stupid cannot exculpate themselves by the plea of ignorance. The Psalmist therefore, with great propriety, exclaims, “ He covereth himself with light as with a garment ; ” (*t*) as if he had said, that his first appearance in visible apparel was at the creation of the world, when he displayed those glories which are still conspicuous on every side. In the same place, the Psalmist compares the expanded heavens to a royal pavilion ; — he says that “ he layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters ; maketh the clouds his chariot ; walketh upon the wings of the wind ; ” and maketh the winds and the lightnings his swift messengers. And because the glory of his power and wisdom is more refulgently displayed above, heaven is generally called his palace. And, in the first place, whithersoever you turn your eyes, there is not an atom of the world in which you cannot behold some brilliant sparks at least of his glory. But you cannot at one view take a survey of this most ample and beautiful machine in all its vast extent, without being completely overwhelmed with its infinite splendour. Wherefore the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews elegantly represents the worlds as the manifestations of invisible things ; (*v*) for the exact symmetry of the universe is a mirror, in which we may contemplate the otherwise invisible God. For which reason the Psalmist (*w*) attributes to the celestial bodies a language universally known ; for they afford a testimony of the Deity too evident to escape the observation even of the most ignorant people in the world. But the Apostle more distinctly asserts this manifestation to men of what was useful to be known concerning God ; “ for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.” (*x*)

II. Of his wonderful wisdom, both heaven and earth contain innumerable proofs ; not only those more abstruse things, which are the subjects of astronomy, medicine, and the whole science of physics, but those things which force themselves on the view of the most illiterate of mankind, so that they cannot open their eyes without being constrained to witness them. Adepts, indeed, in those liberal arts, or persons just

(*t*) Psalm civ. 2.(*v*) Heb. xi. 3.(*w*) Psalm xix. 1, 3.(*x*) Rom. i. 20.

initiated into them, are thereby enabled to proceed much further in investigating the secrets of Divine Wisdom. Yet ignorance of those sciences prevents no man from such a survey of the workmanship of God, as is more than sufficient to excite his admiration of the Divine Architect. In disquisitions concerning the motions of the stars, in fixing their situations, measuring their distances, and distinguishing their peculiar properties, there is need of skill, exactness, and industry; and the providence of God being more clearly revealed by these discoveries, the mind ought to rise to a sublimer elevation for the contemplation of his glory. But since the meanest and most illiterate of mankind, who are furnished with no other assistance than their own eyes, cannot be ignorant of the excellence of the Divine skill, exhibiting itself in that endless, yet regular variety of the innumerable celestial host, — it is evident, that the Lord abundantly manifests his wisdom to every individual on earth. Thus it belongs to a man of preëminent ingenuity to examine, with the critical exactness of Galen, the connection, the symmetry, the beauty, and the use of the various parts of the human body. But the composition of the human body is universally acknowledged to be so ingenious, as to render its Maker the object of deserved admiration.

III. And therefore some of the philosophers (*y*) of antiquity have justly called man a microcosm, or world in miniature; because he is an eminent specimen of the power, goodness, and wisdom of God, and contains in him wonders enough to occupy the attention of our minds, if we are not indisposed to such a study. For this reason, Paul, having remarked that the blind “might feel after God and find him,” immediately adds, that “he is not far from every one of us;” (*z*) because every man has undoubtedly an inward perception of the celestial goodness, by which he is quickened. But if, to attain some ideas of God, it be not necessary for us to go beyond ourselves, what an unpardonable indolence is it in those who will not descend into themselves that they may find him! For the same reason, David, having briefly celebrated the wonderful name and honour of God, which are universally conspicuous, immediately exclaims, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (*a*) Again, “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength.” Thus declaring not only that the human race is a clear mirror of the works of God, but that even infants at the breast have tongues so eloquent for the publication of his glory, that there is no necessity for other orators; whence he hesitates not to produce them as fully

(*y*) Macrob. lib. 2. de Somn. Scip. c. 12. Boet. de Defin. Arist. lib. 1. de Hist. Animal.

(*z*) Acts xvii. 27.

(*a*) Psalm viii. 2, 4.

capable of confuting the madness of those whose diabolical pride would wish to extinguish the name of God. Hence also what Paul quotes from Aratus, that "we are the offspring of God;" (b) since his adorning us with such great excellence has proved him to be our Father. So, from the dictates of common sense and experience, the heathen poets called him the Father of men. Nor will any man freely devote himself to the service of God, unless he have been allured to love and reverence him, by first experiencing his paternal love.

IV. But herein appears the vile ingratitude of men — that, while they ought to be proclaiming the praises of God for the wonderful skill displayed in their formation, and the inestimable bounties he bestows on them, they are only inflated with the greater pride. They perceive how wonderfully God works within them, and experience teaches them what a variety of blessings they receive from his liberality. They are constrained to know, whether willingly or not, that these are proofs of his divinity: yet they suppress this knowledge in their hearts. Indeed, they need not go out of themselves, provided they do not, by arrogating to themselves what is given from heaven, smother the light which illuminates their minds to a clearer discovery of God. Even in the present day, there are many men of monstrous dispositions, who hesitate not to pervert all the seeds of divinity sown in the nature of man, in order to bury in oblivion the name of God. How detestable is this frenzy, that man, discovering in his body and soul a hundred vestiges of God, should make this very excellence a pretext for the denial of his being! They will not say that they are distinguished from the brutes by chance; but they ascribe it to nature, which they consider as the author of all things, and remove God out of sight. They perceive most exquisite workmanship in all their members, from the head to the feet. Here also they substitute nature in the place of God. But above all, the rapid motions of the soul, its noble faculties, and excellent talents, discover a Divinity not easily concealed; unless the Epicureans, like the Cyclops, from this eminence should audaciously wage war against God. Do all the treasures of heavenly wisdom concur in the government of a worm five feet in length? and shall the universe be destitute of this privilege? To state that there is in the soul a certain machinery corresponding to every part of the body, is so far from obscuring the divine glory, that it is rather an illustration of it. Let Epicurus answer; what concourse of atoms in the concoction of food and drink distributes part into excrements and part into blood, and causes the several members to perform

(b) Acts xvii. 28.

their different offices with as much diligence as if so many souls by common consent governed one body?

V. But my present concern is not with that sty of swines : I rather address those who, influenced by preposterous subtleties, would indirectly employ that frigid dogma of Aristotle to destroy the immortality of the soul, and deprive God of his rights. For, because the organs of the body are directed by the faculties of the soul, they pretend the soul to be so united to the body as to be incapable of subsisting without it ; and by their eulogies of nature do all they can to suppress the name of God. But the powers of the soul are far from being limited to functions subservient to the body. For what concern has the body in measuring the heavens, counting the number of the stars, computing their several magnitudes, and acquiring a knowledge of their respective distances, of the celerity or tardiness of their courses, and of the degrees of their various declinations ? I grant, indeed, the usefulness of astronomy, but only remark that, in these profound researches relating to the celestial orbs, there is no corporeal coöperation, but that the soul has its functions distinct from the body. I have proposed one example, whence inferences may readily be drawn by the readers. The manifold agility of the soul, which enables it to take a survey of heaven and earth ; to join the past and the present ; to retain the memory of things heard long ago ; to conceive of whatever it chooses by the help of imagination ; its ingenuity also in the invention of such admirable arts, — are certain proofs of the divinity in man. Besides, in sleep, it not only turns and moves itself round, but conceives many useful ideas, reasons on various subjects, and even divines future events. What shall we say, but that the vestiges of immortality impressed upon man are absolutely indelible ? Now, what reason can be given, why man, who is of divine original, should not acknowledge his Creator ? Shall we indeed, by the judgment with which we are endued, discern right from wrong, and shall there be no judge in heaven ? Shall we, even in our sleep, have some remains of intelligence, and shall there be no God to govern the world ? Shall we be esteemed the inventors of so many useful arts, that God may be defrauded of his praise ? Whereas experience abundantly teaches, that all we have is variously distributed to us by some superior Being. The clamour of some, about a secret inspiration animating the whole world, is not only weak, but altogether profane. They are pleased with the celebrated passage of Virgil —

<p>“ Know, first, a spirit, with an active flame, Fills, feeds, and animates this mighty frame ; Runs through the watery worlds, the fields of air, The ponderous earth, the depths of heaven ; and there Glows in the sun and moon, and burns in every star.</p>	}
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Thus, mingling with the mass, the general soul
 Lives in the parts, and agitates the whole.
 From that celestial energy began
 The low-browed brute, th' imperial race of man,
 The painted birds who wing th' aerial plain,
 And all the mighty monsters of the main ;
 Their souls at first from high Olympus came," &c. (c)

Just as if the world, which is a theatre erected for displaying the glory of God, were its own creator ! For thus writes the same poet in another place, following the common opinion of the Greeks and Latins —

" Led by such wonders, sages have opined,
 That bees have portions of a heavenly mind ;
 That God pervades, and, like one common soul,
 Fills, feeds, and animates the world's great whole ;
 That flocks, herds, beasts, and men, from him receive
 Their vital breath ; in him all move and live ;
 That souls discerpt from him shall never die, }
 But back resolved to God and heaven shall fly, }
 And live for ever in the starry sky." (d)

See the efficacy of that jejune speculation concerning a universal mind animating and actuating the world, in the production and encouragement of piety in the human heart. This more fully appears also from the profane expressions of the filthy Lucretius, which are deductions from the same principle. (e) Its true tendency is to set up a shadowy deity, and to banish all ideas of the true God, the proper object of fear and worship. I confess, indeed, that the expression, that nature is God, may be used in a pious sense by a pious mind ; but, as it is harsh and inconsistent with strict propriety of speech, nature being rather an order prescribed by God, it is dangerous in matters so momentous, and demanding peculiar caution, to confound the Deity with the inferior course of his works.

VI. Let us remember, then, in every consideration of our own nature, that there is one God, who governs all natures, and who expects us to regard him, to direct our faith to him, to worship and invoke him. For nothing is more preposterous than to enjoy such splendid advantages, which proclaim within us their divine origin, and to neglect the Author who bountifully bestows them. Now, what illustrious specimens of his power have we to arrest our attention ! unless it be possible for us not to know what strength is required to sustain with his word this immense fabric of heaven and earth ; now by his mere nod to shake the heaven with roaring peals of thunder, to consume whatever he choose with lightnings, and set the atmosphere on fire with the flame ; now to disturb it with

(c) *Æneid* vi. Pitt's Translation. (d) *Georg.* iv. Warton's Translation.
 (e) *De Rerum Natur.* lib. 1.

tempests in various forms, and immediately, if he please, to compose all to instantaneous serenity ; to restrain, suspended as it were in air, the sea, which, by its elevation, seems to threaten the earth with continual devastation ; now raising it in a tremendous manner, by the tumultuous violence of the winds, and now appeasing the waves to render it calm. To this purpose are the numerous praises of the power of God, drawn from the testimonies of nature, particularly in the book of Job, and in the prophecies of Isaiah ; which I now purposely omit, as they will be more suitably introduced, when I discuss the scriptural account of the creation of the world. Only I wished at present to hint, that this way of seeking God, by tracing the lineaments which, both above and below us, exhibit such a lively adumbration of him, is common to aliens, and to those who belong to his family. His power leads us to the consideration of his eternity ; because he, from whom all things derive their origin, must necessarily be eternal and self-existent. But if we inquire the reason that induced him first to create all things, and now to preserve them, we shall find the sole cause to be his own goodness. But though this be the only cause, it should be more than sufficient to attract us to love him ; since, according to the Psalmist, (f) there is no creature that does not participate in the effusions of his mercy.

VII. In the second species of his works, such as happen out of the ordinary course of nature, the proofs of his perfections are equally clear. For he so regulates his providence in the government of human society, that, while he exhibits, in innumerable ways, his benignity and beneficence to all, he likewise declares, by evident and daily indications, his clemency to the pious, and his severity to the wicked and ungodly. For no doubt can be entertained respecting his punishment of flagitious crimes ; inasmuch as he clearly demonstrates himself to be the guardian and avenger of innocence, in prospering with his blessing the life of good men, in assisting their necessities, assuaging and comforting their sorrows, alleviating their calamities, and providing in all things for their safety. Nor should it perplex or eclipse his perpetual rule of righteousness, that he frequently permits the wicked and guilty for a time to exult in impunity ; but suffers good men to be undeservedly harassed with much adversity, and even to be oppressed by the iniquitous malice of the ungodly. We ought rather to make a very different reflection ; that, when he clearly manifests his wrath in the punishment of one sin, he hates all sins ; and that, since he now passes by many sins unpunished, there will be a judgment hereafter, till which the punishment is de-

(f) Psalm cxlv. 9.

ferred. So, also, what ample occasion he supplies us for the consideration of his mercy, while, with unwearied benignity, he pursues the miserable, calling them back to himself with more than paternal indulgence, till his beneficence overcomes their depravity !

VIII. To this end the Psalmist, (*g*) mentioning that God, in desperate cases, suddenly and wonderfully succors, beyond all expectation, those who are miserable and ready to perish, either protecting from beasts of prey such as are wandering in deserts, and, at length, reconducting them into the right way, or supplying with food the needy and hungry, or delivering captives from dreary dungeons and iron chains, or bringing the shipwrecked safe into port, or healing the diseases of some who are almost dead, or scorching the earth with excessive heat and drought, or fertilizing it with the secret showers of his mercy, or elevating the meanest of the vulgar, or degrading nobles from their dignified stations, — the Psalmist, I say, having proposed such examples as these, infers from them that what are accounted fortuitous accidents, are so many proofs of his heavenly providence, especially of his paternal clemency ; and that hence the pious have cause to rejoice, while the mouths of the impious and reprobate are stopped. But, since the majority of men, immersed in their errors, are blind amidst the greatest opportunities of seeing, he accounts it a rare instance of singular wisdom discreetly to consider these works of God ; (*h*) from the sight of which, some, who, in other instances, discover the greatest acuteness, receive no benefit. And, notwithstanding all the displays of the glory of God, scarcely one man in a hundred is really a spectator of it. His power and wisdom are equally conspicuous. His power is illustriously manifested, when the ferocity of the impious, universally deemed insuperable, is quelled in an instant, their arrogance subdued, their strongest fortresses demolished, their weapons and armour broken in pieces, their strength diminished, their machinations confounded, and they fall by their own exertions ; when the audacity, which exalted itself above the heavens, is thrown down to the centre of the earth ; when, on the contrary, “ the poor are raised out of the dust, and the needy out of the dung-hill ; ” (*i*) the oppressed and afflicted extricated from distressing extremities, and the desperate restored to a good hope ; when the unarmed are victorious over those who are armed, the few over the many, the weak over the strong. But his wisdom is eminently displayed in ordering every dispensation at the best possible time, confounding the greatest worldly sagacity, “ taking the wise in their own craftiness,” (*k*) and

(*g*) Psalm cvii.
(*h*) Psalm cvii. 43.

(*i*) Psalm cxlii. 7.
(*k*) 1 Cor. iii. 19.

finally disposing all things according to the dictates of the highest reason.

IX. We see that there is no need of any long or laborious argumentation, to obtain and produce testimonies for illustrating and asserting the Divine Majesty ; since, from the few which we have selected and cursorily mentioned, it appears that they are every where so evident and obvious, as easily to be distinguished by the eyes, and pointed out with the fingers. And here it must again be observed, that we are invited to a knowledge of God ; not such as, content with empty speculation, merely floats in the brain, but such as will be solid and fruitful, if rightly received and rooted in our hearts. For the Lord is manifested by his perfections : perceiving the influence and enjoying the benefits of which, we must necessarily be more acutely impressed with such a knowledge, than if we imagined a Deity of whose influence we had no perception. Whence we conclude this to be the right way, and the best method of seeking God ; not with presumptuous curiosity to attempt an examination of his essence, which is rather to be adored than too curiously investigated ; but to contemplate him in his works, in which he approaches and familiarizes, and, in some measure, communicates himself to us. To this the Apostle referred, when he said, that he is not to be sought far off, since, by his attribute of omnipresence, he dwells in every one of us. (l) Therefore David, having before confessed his greatness ineffable, after he descends to the mention of his works, adds, that he will “ declare this greatness.” (m) Wherefore it becomes us also to apply ourselves to such an investigation of God, as may fill our understanding with admiration, and powerfully interest our feelings. And, as Augustine somewhere teaches, being incapable of comprehending him, and fainting, as it were, under his immensity, we must take a view of his works, that we may be refreshed with his goodness. (n)

X. Now, such a knowledge ought not only to excite us to the worship of God, but likewise to awaken and arouse us to the hope of a future life. For when we consider, that the specimens given by the Lord, both of his clemency and of his severity, are only begun, and not completed, we certainly should esteem these as preludes to greater things, of which the manifestation and full exhibition are deferred to another life. When we see that pious men are loaded with afflictions by the impious, harassed with injuries, oppressed with calumnies, and vexed with contumelious and opprobrious treatment ; that the wicked, on the contrary, flourish, prosper, obtain ease and dignity, and all with impunity, — we should immediately con-

(l) Acts xvii. 27.

(m) Psalm cxlv. 6.

(n) Aug. in Psal. cxliv.

clude, that there is another life, to which is reserved the vengeance due to iniquity, and the reward of righteousness. Moreover, when we observe the faithful frequently chastised by the Lord's rod, we may conclude, with great certainty, that the impious shall not always escape his vengeance. For that is a wise observation of Augustine — "If open punishment were now inflicted for every sin, it would be supposed that nothing would be reserved till the last judgment. Again, if God now did not openly punish any sin, it would be presumed that there was no divine providence." (*o*) It must therefore be confessed, that in each of the works of God, but more especially in the whole considered together, there is a bright exhibition of the divine perfections; by which the whole human race is invited and allured to the knowledge of God, and thence to true and complete felicity. But, though those perfections are most luminously portrayed around us, we only discover their principal tendency, their use, and the end of our contemplation of them, when we descend into our own selves, and consider by what means God displays in us his life, wisdom, and power, and exercises towards us his righteousness, goodness, and mercy. For, though David justly complains that unbelievers are fools, because they consider not the profound designs of God in the government of mankind, (*p*) yet there is much truth in what he says in another place — that the wonders of Divine Wisdom in this respect exceed in number the hairs of our head. (*q*) But as this argument must be treated more at large in due course, I at present omit it.

XI. But, notwithstanding the clear representations given by God in the mirror of his works, both of himself and of his everlasting dominion, such is our stupidity, that, always inattentive to these obvious testimonies, we derive no advantage from them. For, with regard to the structure and very beautiful organization of the world, how few of us are there, who, when lifting up their eyes to heaven, or looking round on the various regions of the earth, direct their minds to the remembrance of the Creator, and do not rather content themselves with a view of his works, to the total neglect of their Author! And with respect to those things that daily happen out of the ordinary course of nature, is it not the general opinion, that men are rolled and whirled about by the blind temerity of fortune, rather than governed by the providence of God? Or if, by the guidance and direction of these things, we are ever driven (as all men must sometimes be) to the consideration of a God, yet, when we have rashly conceived an idea of some deity, we soon slide into our own carnal dreams, or depraved

(*o*) De Civit. Dei. lib. 1, cap. 8.

(*p*) Psalm xcii. 6.

(*q*) Psalm xl. 12.

inventions, corrupting by our vanity the purity of divine truth. We differ from one another, in that each individual imbibes some peculiarity of error; but we perfectly agree in a universal departure from the one true God, to preposterous trifles. This disease affects, not only the vulgar and ignorant, but the most eminent, and those who, in other things, discover peculiar sagacity. How abundantly have all the philosophers, in this respect, betrayed their stupidity and folly! For, to spare others, chargeable with greater absurdities, Plato himself, the most religious and judicious of them all, loses himself in his round globe. (r) And what would not befall others, when their principal men, whose place it was to enlighten the rest, stumble upon such gross errors! So also, while the government of human actions proves a providence too plainly to admit of a denial, men derive no more advantage from it, than if they believed all things to be agitated forwards and backwards by the uncertain caprice of fortune; so great is our propensity to vanity and error! I speak exclusively of the excellent of mankind, not of the vulgar, whose madness in the profanation of divine truth has known no bounds.

XII. Hence that immense flood of errors, which has deluged the whole world. For every man's understanding is like a labyrinth to him; so that it is not to be wondered at, that the different nations were drawn aside into various inventions, and even that almost every individual had his own particular deity. For, amidst the union of temerity and wantonness with ignorance and darkness, scarcely a man could be found who did not frame to himself some idol or phantasm instead of God. Indeed, the immense multitude of gods proceeding from the mind of man, resembles the ebullition of waters from a vast and ample spring, while every one, with an extreme licentiousness of error, invents one thing or another concerning God himself. It is not necessary here to compose a catalogue of the superstitions which have perplexed the world; for it would be an endless task; and, without a word more being said, the horrible blindness of the human mind sufficiently appears from such a multiplicity of corruptions. I pass over the rude and unlearned vulgar. But among the philosophers, (s) who attempted with reason and learning to penetrate heaven, how shameful is the diversity! In proportion to the vigour of his natural genius, and the polish acquired by art and science, each of them seemed to give the more specious colouring to his own opinion; but, on a close inspection, you will find them all fading colours. The Stoics said, in their own opinion very

(r) Plut. de Philosoph. placitis, lib. 1. Plato in Timæo. Cic lib. 1, de Natur. Deor.

(s) Lactant. Institut. div.

shrewdly, that from all the parts of nature may be collected various names of God, but yet that the one God is not therefore divided; (t) as if we were not already too much inclined to vanity, without being further and more violently seduced into error, by the notion of such a various abundance of gods. The mystical theology of the Egyptians also shows that they all sedulously endeavoured to preserve the appearance of reason in the midst of their folly. (v) And any thing apparently probable might at first sight, perhaps, deceive the simple and incautious; but there never was any human invention by which religion was not basely corrupted. And this confused diversity imboldened the Epicureans, and other gross despisers of piety, to reject all idea of God. For, seeing the wisest of men contending with each other for contrary opinions, they hesitated not, from their dissensions, and from the frivolous and absurd doctrines maintained by the different parties, to infer, that it was vain and foolish for men to torment themselves with investigations concerning God, who does not exist. And this they thought they might do with impunity, supposing that a compendious denial of any God at all would be better than feigning uncertain gods, and thereby occasioning endless controversies. They reason very ignorantly, or rather endeavour to conceal their own impiety behind the ignorance of men, which not at all justifies any encroachment on God. But from the general confession, that there is no subject productive of so many dissensions among the learned as well as the unlearned, it is inferred, that the minds of men, which err so much in investigations concerning God, are extremely blind and stupid in celestial mysteries. Others commend the answer of Simonides, (w) who, being asked by Hiero the Tyrant what God was, requested a day to consider it. When the tyrant, the next day, repeated the inquiry, he begged to be allowed two days longer; and, having often doubled the number of days, at length answered, "The longer I consider the subject, the more obscure it appears to me." He prudently suspended his opinion on a subject so obscure to him; yet this shows that men, who are taught only by nature, have no certain, sound, or distinct knowledge, but are confined to confused principles; so that they worship an unknown God.

XIII. Now, it must also be maintained, that whoever adulterates the pure religion, (which must necessarily be the case of all who are influenced by their own imagination,) he is guilty of a departure from the one God. They will profess, indeed, a different intention; but what they intend, or what

(t) Seneca, lib. 4, de benef., &c.

(v) Plutarch. lib. 1, de Isid. & Osirid. Cic. lib. 1, de Nat. Deor.

(w) Cic. lib. de Nat. Deor.

they persuade themselves, is of little importance ; since the Holy Spirit pronounces all to be apostates, who, in the darkness of their minds, substitute demons in the place of God. For this reason Paul declares the Ephesians to have been "without God" (*x*) — till they had learned from the gospel the worship of the true God. Nor should this be restricted to one nation only, since, in another place, he asserts of men in general, that they "became vain in their imaginations," (*y*) after the majesty of the Creator had been discovered to them in the structure of the world. And therefore the Scripture, to make room for the only true God, condemns, as false and lying, whatever was formerly worshipped as divine among the Gentiles, (*z*) and leaves no Deity but in Mount Sion, where flourished the peculiar knowledge of God. Indeed, among the Gentiles, the Samaritans, in the days of Christ, seemed to approach very nearly to true piety ; yet we hear, from the mouth of Christ, that they "worshipped they knew not what ;" (*a*) whence it follows, that they were under a vain and erroneous delusion. In fine, though they were not all the subjects of gross vices, or open idolaters, there was no pure and approved religion, their notions being founded only in common sense. For, though there were a few uninfected with the madness of the vulgar, this assertion of Paul remains unshaken, that "none of the princes of this world knew the wisdom of God." (*b*) But if the most exalted have been involved in the darkness of error, what must be said of the dregs of the people ! Wherefore it is not surprising if the Holy Spirit reject, as spurious, every form of worship which is of human contrivance ; because, in the mysteries of heaven, an opinion acquired by human means, though it may not always produce an immense mass of errors, yet always produces some. And though no worse consequence follow, it is no trivial fault to worship, at an uncertainty, an unknown god ; of which, however, Christ pronounces all to be guilty who have not been taught by the law what god they ought to worship. And indeed the best legislators have proceeded no further than to declare religion to be founded upon common consent. And even Socrates, in Xenophon, (*c*) praises the answer of Apollo, which directed that every man should worship the gods according to the rites of his country, and the custom of his own city. But whence had mortals this right of determining, by their own authority, what far exceeds all the world ? or who could so acquiesce in the decrees of the rulers or the ordinances of the people, as without hesitation to receive a god delivered

(*x*) Ephes. ii. 12.(*y*) Rom. i. 21.(*z*) Hab. ii. 18, 20.(*a*) John iv. 22.(*b*) 1 Cor. ii. 8.(*c*) Xenoph. de Diet. et Fact. Socrat. lib. 1. Cic. de Legib. lib. 2.

to him by the authority of man? Every man will rather abide by his own judgment, than be subject to the will of another. Since, then, the following of the custom of a city, or the consent of antiquity, in divine worship, is too weak and frail a bond of piety, it remains for God himself to give a revelation concerning himself from heaven.

XIV. Vain, therefore, is the light afforded us in the formation of the world to illustrate the glory of its Author; which, though its rays be diffused all around us, is insufficient to conduct us into the right way. Some sparks, indeed, are kindled, but smothered before they have emitted any great degree of light. Wherefore the Apostle, in the place before cited, says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God;" (*d*) thus intimating, that the invisible Deity was represented by such visible objects, yet that we have no eyes to discern him, unless they be illuminated through faith by an internal revelation of God. Nor does Paul, where he observes, that "that which may be known of God is manifest" (*e*) in the creation of the world, design such a manifestation as human sagacity may comprehend; but rather shows, that its utmost extent is to render men inexcusable. The same writer also, though in one place (*f*) he denies that God is to be traced far off, seeing he dwells within us, yet teaches, in another place, (*g*) the consequences of such a proximity. God, says he, "in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." (*h*) Though the Lord, then, is not destitute of a testimony concerning himself, while with various and most abundant benignity he sweetly allures mankind to a knowledge of him, yet they persist in following their own ways, their pernicious and fatal errors.

XV. But whatever deficiency of natural ability prevents us from attaining the pure and clear knowledge of God, yet, since that deficiency arises from our own fault, we are left without any excuse. Nor indeed can we set up any pretence of ignorance, that will prevent our own consciences from perpetually accusing us of indolence and ingratitude. Truly it would be a defence worthy to be admitted, if a man should plead that he wanted ears to hear the truth, for the publication of which even the mute creatures are supplied with most melodious voices; if he should allege that his eyes are not capable of seeing what is demonstrated by the creatures without the help

(*d*) Heb. xi. 3.(*e*) Rom. i. 19.(*f*) Rom. i. 20.(*g*) Acts xvii. 27.(*h*) Acts xiv. 16, 17.

of the eyes; if he should plead mental imbecility, while all the irrational creatures instruct us. Wherefore we are justly excluded from all excuse for our uncertain and extravagant deviations, since all things conspire to show us the right way. But, however men are chargeable with sinfully corrupting the seeds of divine knowledge, which, by the wonderful operation of nature, are sown in their hearts, so that they produce no good and fair crop, yet it is beyond a doubt, that the simple testimony magnificently borne by the creatures to the glory of God, is very insufficient for our instruction. For as soon as a survey of the world has just shown us a deity, neglecting the true God, we set up in his stead the dreams and phantasms of our own brains; and confer on them the praise of righteousness, wisdom, goodness, and power, due to him. We either obscure his daily acts, or pervert them by an erroneous estimate; thereby depriving the acts themselves of their glory, and their Author of his deserved praise.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GUIDANCE AND TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURE NECESSARY TO LEAD TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE CREATOR.

THOUGH the light which presents itself to all eyes, both in heaven and in earth, is more than sufficient to deprive the ingratitude of men of every excuse, since God, in order to involve all mankind in the same guilt, sets before them all, without exception, an exhibition of his majesty, delineated in the creatures, — yet we need another and better assistance, properly to direct us to the Creator of the world. Therefore he hath not unnecessarily added the light of his word, to make himself known unto salvation, and hath honoured with this privilege those whom he intended to unite in a more close and familiar connection with himself. For, seeing the minds of all men to be agitated with unstable dispositions, when he had chosen the Jews as his peculiar flock, he enclosed them as in a fold, that they might not wander after the vanities of other nations. And it is not without cause that he preserves us in the pure knowledge of himself by the same means; for, otherwise, they who seem comparatively to stand firm, would soon fall. For, as persons who are old, or whose eyes are by any means become dim, if you show them the most beautiful book, though they perceive something written, but can scarcely read two

words together, yet, by the assistance of spectacles, will begin to read distinctly, — so the Scripture, collecting in our minds the otherwise confused notions of Deity, dispels the darkness, and gives us a clear view of the true God. This, then, is a singular favour, that, in the instruction of the Church, God not only uses mute teachers, but even opens his own sacred mouth; not only proclaims that some god ought to be worshipped, but at the same time pronounces himself to be the Being to whom this worship is due; and not only teaches the elect to raise their view to a Deity, but also exhibits himself as the object of their contemplation. This method he hath observed toward his Church from the beginning; beside those common lessons of instruction, to afford them also his word; which furnishes a more correct and certain criterion to distinguish him from all fictitious deities. And it was undoubtedly by this assistance that Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the rest of the patriarchs, attained to that familiar knowledge which distinguished them from unbelievers. I speak not yet of the peculiar doctrine of faith which illuminated them into the hope of eternal life. For, to pass from death to life, they must have known God, not only as the Creator, but also as the Redeemer; as they certainly obtained both from his word. For that species of knowledge, which related to him as the Creator and Governor of the world, in order, preceded the other. To this was afterwards added the other internal knowledge, which alone vivifies dead souls, and apprehends God, not only as the Creator of the world, and as the sole Author and Arbiter of all events, but also as the Redeemer in the person of the Mediator. But, being not yet come to the fall of man and the corruption of nature, I also forbear to treat of the remedy. Let the reader remember, therefore, that I am not yet treating of that covenant by which God adopted the children of Abraham, and of that point of doctrine by which believers have always been particularly separated from the profane nations, since that is founded on Christ; but am only showing how we ought to learn from the Scripture, that God, who created the world, may be certainly distinguished from the whole multitude of fictitious deities. The series of subjects will, in due time, lead us to redemption. But, though we shall adduce many testimonies from the New Testament, and some also from the Law and the Prophets, in which Christ is expressly mentioned, yet they will all tend to prove, that the Scripture discovers God to us as the Creator of the world, and declares what sentiments we should form of him, that we may not be seeking after a deity in a labyrinth of uncertainty.

II. But, whether God revealed himself to the patriarchs by oracles and visions, or suggested, by means of the ministry of

men, what should be handed down by tradition to their posterity, it is beyond a doubt that their minds were impressed with a firm assurance of the doctrine, so that they were persuaded and convinced that the information they had received came from God. For God always secured to his word an undoubted credit, superior to all human opinion. At length, that the truth might remain in the world in a continual course of instruction to all ages, he determined that the same oracles which he had deposited with the patriarchs should be committed to public records. With this design the Law was promulgated, to which the Prophets were afterwards annexed, as its interpreters. — For, though the uses of the law were many, as will be better seen in the proper place; and particularly the intention of Moses, and of all the prophets, was to teach the mode of reconciliation between God and man, (whence also Paul calls Christ “the end of the law,”) (i) — yet I repeat again, that, beside the peculiar doctrine of faith and repentance, which proposes Christ as the Mediator, the Scripture distinguishes the only true God by certain characters and titles, as the Creator and Governor of the world, that he may not be confounded with the multitude of false gods. Therefore, though every man should seriously apply himself to a consideration of the works of God, being placed in this very splendid theatre to be a spectator of them, yet he ought principally to attend to the word, that he may attain superior advantages. And, therefore, it is not surprising, that they who are born in darkness grow more and more hardened in their stupidity; since very few attend to the word of God with teachable dispositions, to restrain themselves within the limits which it prescribes, but rather exult in their own vanity. This, then, must be considered as a fixed principle, that, in order to enjoy the light of true religion, we ought to begin with the doctrine of heaven; and that no man can have the least knowledge of true and sound doctrine, without having been a disciple of the Scripture. Hence originates all true wisdom, when we embrace with reverence the testimony which God hath been pleased therein to deliver concerning himself. For obedience is the source, not only of an absolutely perfect and complete faith, but of all right knowledge of God. And truly in this instance God hath, in his providence, particularly consulted the true interests of mankind in all ages.

III. For, if we consider the mutability of the human mind, — how easy its lapse into forgetfulness of God; how great its propensity to errors of every kind; how violent its rage for the perpetual fabrication of new and false religions, — it will be easy

(i) Rom. x. 4.

to perceive the necessity of the heavenly doctrine being thus committed to writing, that it might not be lost in oblivion, or evaporate in error, or be corrupted by the presumption of men. Since it is evident, therefore, that God, foreseeing the inefficacy of his manifestation of himself in the exquisite structure of the world, hath afforded the assistance of his word to all those to whom he determined to make his instructions effectual, — if we seriously aspire to a sincere contemplation of God, it is necessary for us to pursue this right way. We must come, I say, to the word, which contains a just and lively description of God as he appears in his works, when those works are estimated, not according to our depraved judgment, but by the rule of eternal truth. If we deviate from it, as I have just observed, though we run with the utmost celerity, yet, being out of the course, we shall never reach the goal. For it must be concluded, that the light of the Divine countenance, which even the Apostle says “no man can approach unto,” (*j*) is like an inexplicable labyrinth to us, unless we are directed by the line of the word; so that it were better to halt in this way, than to run with the greatest rapidity out of it. Therefore David, inculcating the necessity of the removal of superstitions out of the world, that pure religion may flourish, frequently introduces God as “reigning;” (*k*) by the word “reigning,” intending, not the power which he possesses, and which he exercises in the universal government of nature, but the doctrine in which he asserts his legitimate sovereignty; because errors can never be eradicated from the human heart, till the true knowledge of God is implanted in it.

IV. Therefore the same Psalmist, having said, that “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge,” (*l*) afterwards proceeds to the mention of the word: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” For, though he also comprehends other uses of the law, yet he suggests, in general, that, since God’s invitation of all nations to him by the view of heaven and earth is ineffectual, this is the peculiar school of the children of God. The same is adverted to in the twenty-ninth Psalm, where the Psalmist, having preached the terrors of the Divine voice, which in thunders, in winds, in showers, in whirlwinds, and in tempests, shakes the earth, makes the mountains tremble, and breaks the cedars, adds, at length, towards the close, “in

(*j*) 1 Tim. vi. 16.(*k*) Ps. xciii. xcvi., &c.(*l*) Ps. xix. 1, &c.

his temple doth every one speak of his glory ; " because unbelievers are deaf to all the voices of God, which resound in the air. So, in another Psalm, after describing the terrible waves of the sea, he concludes thus : " Thy testimonies are very sure : holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." (*m*) Hence also proceeds the observation of Christ to the Samaritan woman, that her nation and all others worshipped they knew not what ; and that the Jews were the only worshippers of the true God. (*n*) For, since the human mind is unable, through its imbecility, to attain any knowledge of God without the assistance of his sacred word, all mankind, except the Jews, as they sought God without the word, must necessarily have been wandering in vanity and error.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT NECESSARY TO CONFIRM THE SCRIPTURE, IN ORDER TO THE COMPLETE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS AUTHORITY. THE SUSPENSION OF ITS AUTHORITY ON THE JUDGMENT OF THE CHURCH, AN IMPIOUS FICTION.

BEFORE I proceed any further, it is proper to introduce some remarks on the authority of the Scripture, not only to prepare the mind to regard it with due reverence, but also to remove every doubt. For, when it is admitted to be a declaration of the word of God, no man can be so deplorably presumptuous, unless he be also destitute of common sense and of the common feelings of men, as to dare to derogate from the credit due to the speaker. But since we are not favoured with daily oracles from heaven, and since it is only in the Scriptures that the Lord hath been pleased to preserve his truth in perpetual remembrance, it obtains the same complete credit and authority with believers, when they are satisfied of its divine origin, as if they heard the very words pronounced by God himself. The subject, indeed, merits a diffuse discussion, and a most accurate examination. But the reader will pardon me, if I attend rather to what the design of this work admits, than to what the extensive nature of the present subject requires. But there has very generally prevailed a most pernicious error, that the Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church ; as though the eternal

(*m*) Ps. xciii. 5.

(*n*) John iv. 22.

and inviolable truth of God depended on the arbitrary will of men. For thus, with great contempt of the Holy Spirit, they inquire, Who can assure us that God is the author of them? Who can with certainty affirm, that they have been preserved safe and uncorrupted to the present age? Who can persuade us that this book ought to be received with reverence, and that expunged from the sacred number, unless all these things were regulated by the decisions of the Church? It depends, therefore, (say they,) on the determination of the Church, to decide both what reverence is due to the Scripture, and what books are to be comprised in its canon. Thus sacrilegious men, while they wish to introduce an unlimited tyranny, under the name of the Church, are totally unconcerned with what absurdities they embarrass themselves and others, provided they can extort from the ignorant this one admission, that the Church can do every thing. But, if this be true, what will be the condition of those wretched consciences, which are seeking a solid assurance of eternal life, if all the promises extant concerning it rest only on the judgment of men? Will the reception of such an answer cause their fluctuations to subside, and their terrors to vanish? Again, how will the impious ridicule our faith, and all men call it in question, if it be understood to possess only a precarious authority depending on the favour of men!

II. But such cavillers are completely refuted even by one word of the Apostle. He testifies that the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." (o) If the doctrine of the prophets and apostles be the foundation of the Church, it must have been certain, antecedently to the existence of the Church. Nor is there any foundation for this cavil, that though the Church derive its origin from the Scriptures, yet it remains doubtful what writings are to be ascribed to the prophets and apostles, unless it be determined by the Church. For if the Christian Church has been from the beginning founded on the writings of the prophets and the preaching of the apostles, wherever that doctrine is found, the approbation of it has certainly preceded the formation of the Church; since without it the Church itself had never existed. It is a very false notion, therefore, that the power of judging of the Scripture belongs to the Church, so as to make the certainty of it dependent on the Church's will. Wherefore, when the Church receives it, and seals it with her suffrage, she does not authenticate a thing otherwise dubious or controvertible; but, knowing it to be the truth of her God, performs a duty of piety, by treating it with immediate veneration. But, with regard to the question, How shall we be persuaded of its divine

(o) Eph. ii. 20.

original, unless we have recourse to the decree of the Church? this is just as if any one should inquire, How shall we learn to distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter? For the Scripture exhibits as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black things do of their colour, or sweet and bitter things of their taste.

III. I know, indeed, that they commonly cite the opinion of Augustine, where he says, "that he would not believe the Gospel unless he were influenced by the authority of the Church." (p) But how falsely and unfairly this is cited in support of such a notion, it is easy to discover from the context. He was in that contending with the Manichees, who wished to be credited, without any controversy, when they affirmed the truth to be on their side, but never proved it. Now, as they made the authority of the Gospel a pretext in order to establish the credit of their Manichæus, he inquires what they would do if they met with a man who did not believe the Gospel; with what kind of persuasion they would convert him to their opinion. He afterwards adds, "Indeed, I would not give credit to the Gospel," &c., intending, that he himself, when an alien from the faith, could not be prevailed on to embrace the Gospel as the certain truth of God, till he was convinced by the authority of the Church. And is it surprising that any one, yet destitute of the knowledge of Christ, should pay a respect to men? Augustine, therefore, does not there maintain that the faith of the pious is founded on the authority of the Church, nor does he mean that the certainty of the Gospel depends on it; but simply, that unbelievers would have no assurance of the truth of the Gospel, that would win them to Christ, unless they were influenced by the consent of the Church. And a little before, he clearly confirms it in these words: "When I shall have commended my own creed, and derided yours, what judgment, think you, ought we to form, what conduct ought we to pursue, but to forsake those who invite us to acknowledge things that are certain, and afterwards command us to believe things that are uncertain; and to follow those who invite us first to believe what we cannot yet clearly see, that, being strengthened by faith, we may acquire an understanding of what we believe; our mind being now internally strengthened and illuminated, not by men, but by God himself?" These are the express words of Augustine; whence the inference is obvious to every one, that this holy man did not design to suspend our faith in the Scriptures on the arbitrary decision of the Church, but only to show (what we all confess to be true) that they who

are yet unilluminated by the Spirit of God, are, by a reverence for the Church, brought to such a docility as to submit to learn the faith of Christ from the Gospel; and that thus the authority of the Church is an introduction to prepare us for the faith of the Gospel. For we see that he will have the certainty of the pious to rest on a very different foundation. Otherwise I do not deny his frequently urging on the Manichees the universal consent of the Church, with a view to prove the truth of the Scripture, which they rejected. Whence his rebuke of Faustus, "for not submitting to the truth of the Gospel, so founded, so established, so gloriously celebrated, and delivered through certain successions from the apostolic age." But he nowhere insinuates that the authority which we attribute to the Scripture depends on the definitions or decrees of men: he only produces the universal judgment of the Church, which was very useful to his argument, and gave him an advantage over his adversaries. If any one desire a fuller proof of this, let him read his treatise "Of the Advantage of Believing;" where he will find, that he recommends no other facility of believing, than such as may afford us an introduction, and be a proper beginning of inquiry, as he expresses himself; yet that we should not be satisfied with mere opinion, but rest upon certain and solid truth.

IV. It must be maintained, as I have before asserted, that we are not established in the belief of the doctrine till we are indubitably persuaded that God is its Author. The principal proof, therefore, of the Scriptures is every where derived from the character of the Divine Speaker. The prophets and apostles boast not of their own genius, or any of those talents which conciliate the faith of the hearers; nor do they insist on arguments from reason; but bring forward the sacred name of God, to compel the submission of the whole world. We must now see how it appears, not from probable supposition, but from clear demonstration, that this use of the divine name is neither rash nor fallacious. Now, if we wish to consult the true interest of our consciences; that they may not be unstable and wavering, the subjects of perpetual doubt; that they may not hesitate at the smallest scruples,—this persuasion must be sought from a higher source than human reasons, or judgments, or conjectures—even from the secret testimony of the Spirit. It is true that, if we were inclined to argue the point, many things might be adduced which certainly evince, if there be any God in heaven, that he is the Author of the Law, and the Prophecies, and the Gospel. Even though men of learning and deep judgment rise up in opposition, and exert and display all the powers of their minds in this dispute, yet, unless they are wholly lost to all sense of shame, this confession

will be extorted from them, that the Scripture exhibits the plainest evidences that it is God who speaks in it, which manifests its doctrine to be divine. And we shall soon see, that all the books of the sacred Scripture very far excel all other writings. If we read it with pure eyes and sound minds, we shall immediately perceive the majesty of God, which will subdue our audacious contradictions, and compel us to obey him. Yet it is acting a preposterous part, to endeavour to produce sound faith in the Scripture by disputations. Though, indeed, I am far from excelling in peculiar dexterity or eloquence, yet, if I were to contend with the most subtle despisers of God, who are ambitious to display their wit and their skill in weakening the authority of Scripture, I trust I should be able, without difficulty, to silence their obstreperous clamour. And, if it were of any use to attempt a refutation of their cavils, I would easily demolish the boasts which they mutter in secret corners. But though any one vindicates the sacred word of God from the aspersions of men, yet this will not fix in their hearts that assurance which is essential to true piety. Religion appearing, to profane men, to consist wholly in opinion, in order that they may not believe any thing on foolish or slight grounds, they wish and expect it to be proved by rational arguments, that Moses and the prophets spake by divine inspiration. But I reply, that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason. For, as God alone is a sufficient witness of himself in his own word, so also the word will never gain credit in the hearts of men, till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit, who spake by the mouths of the prophets, should penetrate into our hearts, to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely intrusted to them. And this connection is very suitably expressed in these words: "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my word which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, for ever." (q) Some good men are troubled that they are not always prepared with clear proof to oppose the impious, when they murmur with impunity against the divine word; as though the Spirit were not therefore denominated a "seal," and "an earnest," for the confirmation of the faith of the pious; because, till he illuminate their minds, they are perpetually fluctuating amidst a multitude of doubts.

V. Let it be considered, then, as an undeniable truth, that they who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit, feel an

(q) Isaiah lix. 21.

entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason; but it obtains the credit which it deserves with us by the testimony of the Spirit. For though it conciliate our reverence by its internal majesty, it never seriously affects us till it is confirmed by the Spirit in our hearts. Therefore, being illuminated by him, we now believe the divine original of the Scripture, not from our own judgment or that of others, but we esteem the certainty, that we have received it from God's own mouth by the ministry of men, to be superior to that of any human judgment, and equal to that of an intuitive perception of God himself in it. We seek not arguments or probabilities to support our judgment, but submit our judgments and understandings as to a thing concerning which it is impossible for us to judge; and that not like some persons, who are in the habit of hastily embracing what they do not understand, which displeases them as soon as they examine it, but because we feel the firmest conviction that we hold an invincible truth; nor like those unhappy men who surrender their minds captives to superstitions, but because we perceive in it the undoubted energies of the Divine power, by which we are attracted and inflamed to an understanding and voluntary obedience, but with a vigour and efficacy superior to the power of any human will or knowledge. With the greatest justice, therefore, God exclaims by Isaiah, (*r*) that the prophets and all the people were his witnesses; because, being taught by prophecies, they were certain that God had spoken without the least fallacy or ambiguity. It is such a persuasion, therefore, as requires no reasons; such a knowledge as is supported by the highest reason, in which, indeed, the mind rests with greater security and constancy than in any reasons; it is, finally, such a sentiment as cannot be produced but by a revelation from heaven. I speak of nothing but what every believer experiences in his heart, except that my language falls far short of a just explication of the subject. I pass over many things at present, because this subject will present itself for discussion again in another place. Only let it be known here, that that alone is true faith which the Spirit of God seals in our hearts. And with this one reason every reader of modesty and docility will be satisfied: Isaiah predicts that "all the children" of the renovated Church "shall be taught of God." (*s*) Herein God deigns to confer a singular privilege on his elect, whom he distinguishes from the rest of mankind. For what is the beginning of true learning but a prompt alac-

(*r*) Isaiah xliii. 10.(*s*) Isaiah liv. 13.

urity to hear the voice of God? By the mouth of Moses he demands our attention in these terms: "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? or, Who shall descend into the deep? The word is even in thy mouth." (t) If God hath determined that this treasury of wisdom shall be reserved for his children, it is neither surprising nor absurd, that we see so much ignorance and stupidity among the vulgar herd of mankind. By this appellation I designate even those of the greatest talents and highest rank, till they are incorporated into the Church. Moreover, Isaiah, observing that the prophetic doctrine would be incredible, not only to aliens, but also to the Jews, who wished to be esteemed members of the family, adds, at the same time, the reason — Because the arm of the Lord will not be revealed to all. (v) Whenever, therefore, we are disturbed at the paucity of believers, let us, on the other hand, remember that none, but those to whom it was given, have any apprehension of the mysteries of God.

CHAPTER VIII.

RATIONAL PROOFS TO ESTABLISH THE BELIEF OF THE SCRIPTURE.

WITHOUT this certainty, better and stronger than any human judgment, in vain will the authority of the Scripture be either defended by arguments, or established by the consent of the Church, or confirmed by any other supports; since, unless the foundation be laid, it remains in perpetual suspense. Whilst, on the contrary, when, regarding it in a different point of view from common things, we have once religiously received it in a manner worthy of its excellence, we shall then derive great assistance from things which before were not sufficient to establish the certainty of it in our minds. For it is admirable to observe how much it conduces to our confirmation, attentively to study the order and disposition of the Divine Wisdom dispensed in it, the heavenly nature of its doctrine, which never savours of any thing terrestrial, the beautiful agreement of all the parts with each other, and other similar characters adapted to conciliate respect to any writings. But our hearts are more strongly confirmed, when we reflect that we are constrained to admire it more by the dignity of the subjects than by the beauties of the language. For even this did not happen without the particular providence of God, that the sublime mys-

(t) Deut. xxx. Rom. x.

(v) Isaiah liii. 1.

teries of the kingdom of heaven should be communicated, for the most part, in a humble and contemptible style ; lest, if they had been illustrated with more of the splendour of eloquence, the impious might cavil that their triumph is only the triumph of eloquence. Now, since that uncultivated and almost rude simplicity procures itself more reverence than all the graces of rhetoric, what opinion can we form, but that the force of truth in the sacred Scripture is too powerful to need the assistance of verbal art ? Justly, therefore, does the apostle argue that the faith of the Corinthians was founded, “ not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God,” because his preaching among them was, “ not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” (x) For the truth is vindicated from every doubt, when, unassisted by foreign aid, it is sufficient for its own support. But that this is the peculiar property of the Scripture, appears from the insufficiency of any human compositions, however artificially polished, to make an equal impression on our minds. Read Demosthenes or Cicero ; read Plato, Aristotle, or any others of that class ; I grant that you will be attracted, delighted, moved, and enraptured by them in a surprising manner ; but if, after reading them, you turn to the perusal of the sacred volume, whether you are willing or unwilling, it will affect you so powerfully, it will so penetrate your heart, and impress itself so strongly on your mind, that, compared with its energetic influence, the beauties of rhetoricians and philosophers will almost entirely disappear ; so that it is easy to perceive something divine in the sacred Scriptures, which far surpasses the highest attainments and ornaments of human industry.

II. I grant, indeed, that the diction of some of the prophets is neat and elegant, and even splendid ; so that they are not inferior in eloquence to the heathen writers. And by such examples the Holy Spirit hath been pleased to show, that he was not deficient in eloquence, though elsewhere he hath used a rude and homely style. But whether we read David, Isaiah, and others that resemble them, who have a sweet and pleasant flow of words, or Amos the herdsman, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, whose rougher language savours of rusticity, — that majesty of the Spirit, which I have mentioned, is every where conspicuous. I am not ignorant that Satan in many things imitates God, in order that, by the fallacious resemblance, he may more easily insinuate himself into the minds of the simple ; and has therefore craftily disseminated, in unpolished and even barbarous language, the most impious errors, by which

(x) 1 Cor. ii. 4.

multitudes have been miserably deceived, and has often used obsolete forms of speech as a mask to conceal his impostures. But the vanity and fraud of such affectation are visible to all men of moderate understanding. With respect to the sacred Scripture, though presumptuous men try to cavil at various passages, yet it is evidently replete with sentences which are beyond the powers of human conception. Let all the prophets be examined; not one will be found, who has not far surpassed the ability of men; so that those to whom their doctrine is insipid must be accounted utterly destitute of all true taste.

III. This argument has been copiously treated by other writers; wherefore it may suffice at present merely to hint at a few things which chiefly relate to the subject in a general view. Beside what I have already treated on, the antiquity of the Scripture is of no small weight. For, notwithstanding the fabulous accounts of the Greek writers concerning the Egyptian theology, yet there remains no monument of any religion, but what is much lower than the age of Moses. Nor does Moses invent a new deity; he only makes a declaration of what the Israelites had, through a long series of years, received by tradition from their forefathers concerning the eternal God. For what does he aim at, but to recall them to the covenant made with Abraham? If he had advanced a thing till then unheard of, it would not have been received; but their liberation from the servitude in which they were detained must have been a thing well known to them all; so that the mention of it immediately excited universal attention. It is probable also that they had been informed of the number of four hundred years. Now, we must consider, if Moses (who himself preceded all other writers by such a long distance of time) derives the tradition of his doctrine from so remote a beginning, how much the sacred Scripture exceeds in antiquity all other books.

IV. Unless any would choose to credit the Egyptians, who extend their antiquity to six thousand years before the creation of the world. But since their garrulity has been ridiculed even by all the profane writers, I need not trouble myself with refuting it. Josephus, in his book against Appion, cites from the most ancient writers testimonies worthy of being remembered; whence we may gather, that the doctrine contained in the law has, according to the consent of all nations, been renowned from the remotest ages, although it was neither read nor truly understood. Now, that the malicious might have no room for suspicion, nor even the wicked any pretence for cavilling, God hath provided the most excellent remedies for both these dangers. When Moses relates what Jacob had, almost three hundred years before, by the spirit of inspiration

pronounced concerning his posterity, how does he disgrace his own tribe! He even brands it, in the person of Levi, with perpetual infamy. "Simeon," says he, "and Levi, instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." (y) He certainly might have been silent on that disgraceful circumstance, not only to spare his father, but also to avoid aspersing himself, as well as all his family, with part of the same ignominy. How can any suspicion be entertained of him, who, voluntarily publishing, from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the first of the family from which he was descended was guilty of detestable conduct, neither consults his own personal honours, nor refuses to incur the resentment of his relations, to whom this must undoubtedly have given offence? When he mentions also the impious murmurings of Aaron, his brother, and Miriam, his sister, (z) shall we say that he spake according to the dictates of the flesh, or obeyed the command of the Holy Spirit? Besides, as he enjoyed the supreme authority, why did he not leave to his own sons, at least, the office of the high-priesthood, but place them in the lowest station? I only hint at a few things out of many. But in the law itself many arguments will every where occur, which challenge a full belief, that, without controversy, the legation of Moses was truly divine.

V. Moreover, the miracles which he relates, and which are so numerous and remarkable, are so many confirmations of the law which he delivered, and of the doctrine which he published. For that he was carried up into the mountain in a cloud; that he continued there forty days, deprived of all human intercourse; that, in the act of proclaiming the law, his face shone as with the rays of the sun; that lightnings flashed all around; that thunders and various noises were heard through the whole atmosphere; that a trumpet sounded, but a trumpet not blown by human breath; that the entrance of the tabernacle was concealed from the view of the people by an intervening cloud; that his authority was so miraculously vindicated by the horrible destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all their impious faction; that a rock smitten with a rod immediately emitted a river; that manna rained from heaven at his request; (a) — are not all these so many testimonies from heaven of his being a true prophet? If any one object that I assume, as granted, things which are the subjects of controversy, this cavil is easily answered. For, as Moses published all these things in an assembly of the people, what room was there for fiction among those who had been eye-

(y) Gen. xlix. 5.

(z) Num. xii. 1.

(a) Exod. xxiv. 18; xxxiv. 29; xix. 16; xl. 34. Num. xvi. 24, &c.; xx. 11; xi. 9.

witnesses of the events? Is it probable that he would make his appearance in public, and, accusing the people of infidelity, contumacy, ingratitude, and other crimes, boast that his doctrine had been confirmed in their sight by miracles which they had never seen?

VI. For this also is worthy of being remarked, that all his accounts of miracles are connected with such unpleasant circumstances, as were calculated to stimulate all the people, if there had been but the smallest occasion, to a public and positive contradiction; whence it appears, that they were induced to coincide with him only by the ample conviction of their own experience. But since the matter was too evident for profane writers to take the liberty of denying the performance of miracles by Moses, the father of lies has suggested the calumny of ascribing them to magical arts. But by what kind of conjecture can they pretend to charge him with having been a magician, who had so great an abhorrence of that superstition, as to command, that he who merely consulted magicians and soothsayers should be stoned? (b) Certainly no impostor practises such juggling tricks, who does not make it his study, for the sake of acquiring fame, to astonish the minds of the vulgar. But what is the practice of Moses? Openly avowing that himself and his brother Aaron are nothing, (c) but that they only execute the commands of God, he sufficiently clears his character from every unfavourable aspersions. Now, if the events themselves be considered, what incantation could cause manna to rain daily from heaven sufficient to support the people, and, if any one laid up more than the proper quantity, cause it to putrefy, as a punishment from God for his unbelief? Add also the many serious examinations which God permitted his servant to undergo, so that the clamour of the wicked can now be of no avail. For as often as this holy servant of God was in danger of being destroyed, at one time by proud and petulant insurrections of all the people, at another by the secret conspiracies of a few, — how was it possible for him to elude their inveterate rage by any arts of deception? And the event evidently proves, that by these circumstances his doctrine was confirmed to all succeeding ages.

VII. Moreover, who can deny that his assigning, in the person of the patriarch Jacob, the supreme power to the tribe of Judah, proceeded from a spirit of prophecy, (d) especially if we consider the eventual accomplishment of this prediction? Suppose Moses to have been the first author of it; yet after he committed it to writing, there elapsed four hundred years

(b) Lev. xx 6.

(c) Exod. xvi. 7.

(d) Gen. xlix. 10.

in which we have no mention of the sceptre in the tribe of Judah. After the inauguration of Saul, the regal power seemed to be fixed in the tribe of Benjamin. When Samuel anointed David, what reason appeared for transferring it? Who would have expected a king to arise out of the plebeian family of a herdsman? And of seven brothers, who would have conjectured that such an honour was destined for the youngest? And by what means did he attain a hope of the kingdom? Who can assert that this unction was directed by human art, or industry, or prudence, and was not rather a completion of the prediction of heaven? And in like manner do not his predictions, although obscure, concerning the admission of the Gentiles into the covenant of God, which were accomplished almost two thousand years after, clearly prove him to have spoken under a divine inspiration? I omit other predictions, which so strongly savour of a divine inspiration, that all who have the use of their reason must perceive that it is God who speaks. In short, one song of his is a clear mirror in which God evidently appears. (e)

VIII. But in the other prophets this is yet far more conspicuous. I shall only select a few examples; for to collect all would be too laborious. When, in the time of Isaiah, the kingdom of Judah was in peace, and even when they thought themselves safe in the alliance of the Chaldeans, Isaiah publicly spake of the destruction of the city and the banishment of the people. (f) Now, even if to predict long before things which then seemed false, but have since appeared to be true, were not a sufficiently clear proof of a divine inspiration, to whom but God shall we ascribe the prophecies which he uttered concerning their deliverance? He mentions the name of Cyrus, by whom the Chaldeans were to be subdued, and the people restored to liberty. (g) More than a century elapsed after this prophecy before the birth of Cyrus; for he was not born till about the hundredth year after the prophet's death. No man could then divine, that there would be one Cyrus, who would engage in a war with the Babylonians, who would subjugate such a powerful monarchy, and release the people of Israel from exile. Does not this bare narration, without any ornaments of diction, plainly demonstrate that Isaiah delivered the undoubted oracles of God, and not the conjectures of men? Again, when Jeremiah, just before the people were carried away, limited the duration of their captivity to seventy years, and predicted their liberation and return, must not his tongue have been under the direction of the Spirit of God? (h) What impudence must it be to deny

(e) Deut. xxxii.
(f) Isaiah xxxix. 6.

(g) Isaiah xlv. 1.
(h) Jer. xxv. 11, 12.

that the authority of the prophets has been confirmed by such proofs, or that what they themselves assert, in order to vindicate the credit due to their declarations, has been actually fulfilled! "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth, I tell you of them." (i) I shall not speak of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who, living in distant countries, but prophesying at the same time, so exactly accord in their declarations, as though they had mutually dictated the words to each other. What shall we say of Daniel? Has not he prophesied of the events of nearly six hundred years in such a connected series, as if he were composing a history of transactions already past and universally known? If pious men properly consider these things, they will be sufficiently prepared to curb the petulance of the wicked; for the demonstration is too clear to be liable to any cavils.

IX. I know what is objected by some clamorous men, who would ostentatiously display the force of their understanding in opposing divine truth. For they inquire, Who has assured us that Moses and the prophets actually wrote those books which bear their names? They even dare to question whether such a man as Moses ever existed. But if any man should call in question the existence of Plato, or Aristotle, or Cicero, who would deny that such madness ought to receive corporal punishment? The law of Moses has been wonderfully preserved, rather by the providence of heaven than by the endeavours of men. And though, through the negligence of the priests, it lay for a short time concealed, since it was found by the pious king Josiah, it has continued in the hands of men through every succeeding age. (k) Nor, indeed, did Josiah produce it as a thing unknown or new, but as what had always been public, and the memory of which was then famous. The protograph had been appointed to be kept in the temple, and a transcript of it to be deposited in the royal archives; (l) only the priests had discontinued their ancient custom of publishing the law, and the people themselves had neglected their wonted reading of it: yet there scarcely passed an age in which its sanction was not confirmed and renewed. Were they, who had the writings of David, ignorant of Moses? But, to speak of all at once, it is certain, that their writings descended to posterity only from hand to hand, (so to speak,) through a long series of years transmitted from the fathers, who partly had heard them speak, and partly learned from others who heard them, while it was fresh in their memory, that they had thus spoken.

X. With regard to what they object from the history of the

(i) Isaiah xlii. 9.

(k) 2 Kings xxii. 8.

(l) Deut. xvii. 18.

Maccabees, to diminish the credit of the Scripture, nothing could be conceived more adapted to establish it. But first let us divest it of their artificial colouring, and then retort upon them the weapon which they direct against us. When Antiochus, say they, commanded all the books to be burned, whence proceeded the copies which we now have? I, on the contrary, inquire, where they could so speedily be fabricated. For it is evident, that, as soon as the persecution subsided, they immediately appeared, and were, without controversy, acknowledged as the same by all pious men; who, having been educated in their doctrine, had been familiarly acquainted with them. Nay, even when all the impious, as if by a general conspiracy, so wantonly insulted the Jews, no man ever dared to charge them with forging their books. For, whatever be their opinion of the Jewish religion, yet they confess that Moses was the author of it. What, then, do these clamorous objectors, but betray their own consummate impudence, when they slander, as supposititious, books whose sacred antiquity is confirmed by the consent of all histories? But, to waste no more useless labour in refuting such stale calumnies, let us rather consider how carefully the Lord preserved his own word, when, beyond all hope, he rescued it from the fury of the most cruel of tyrants, as from a devouring fire;—that he endued the pious priests and others with so much constancy, that they hesitated not to redeem this treasure, if necessary, with their lives, to transmit it to posterity; and that he frustrated the most diligent inquisition of so many governors and soldiers. Who is there but must acknowledge it to have been an eminent and wonderful work of God, that those sacred monuments, which the impious had flattered themselves were utterly destroyed, were soon public again, as it were, fully restored to mankind, and, indeed, with far greater honour? For soon after followed the Greek Translation, which published them throughout the world. Nor was God's preserving the tables of his covenant from the sanguinary edicts of Antiochus, the only instance of his wonderful operation, but that, amidst such various miseries, with which the Jewish nation was diminished and laid waste, and at last nearly exterminated, these records still remained entire. The Hebrew language lay not only despised, but almost unknown; and surely, had not God consulted the interest of religion, it had been totally lost. For how much the Jews, after their return from captivity, departed from the genuine use of their native language, appears from the prophets of that age; which it is therefore useful to observe, because this comparison more clearly evinces the antiquity of the law and the prophets. And by whom hath God preserved to us the doctrine of salvation contained in the law and the

prophets, that Christ might be manifested in due time? By his most inveterate enemies, the Jews; whom Augustine therefore justly denominates the librarians of the Christian Church, because they have furnished us with a book of which themselves make no use.

XI. If we proceed to the New Testament, by what solid foundations is its truth supported? Three Evangelists recite their history in a low and mean style. Many proud men are disgusted with that simplicity, because they attend not to the principal points of doctrine; whence it were easy to infer, that they treat of heavenly mysteries which are above human capacity. They who have a spark of ingenuous modesty will certainly be ashamed, if they peruse the first chapter of Luke. Now, the discourses of Christ, a concise summary of which is comprised in these three Evangelists, easily exempt their writings from contempt. But John, thundering from his sublimity, more powerfully than any thunderbolt, levels to the dust the obstinacy of those whom he does not compel to the obedience of faith. Let all those censorious critics whose supreme pleasure consists in banishing all reverence for the Scripture out of their own hearts and the hearts of others, come forth to public view. Let them read the Gospel of John: whether they wish it or not, they will there find numerous passages, which, at least, arouse their indolence; and which will even imprint a horrible brand on their consciences to restrain their ridicule. Similar is the method of Paul and of Peter, in whose writings, though the greater part be blind, yet their heavenly majesty attracts universal attention. But this one circumstance raises their doctrine sufficiently above the world, that Matthew, who had before been confined to the profit of his table, and Peter and John, who had been employed in fishing-boats, — all plain, unlettered men, — had learned nothing in any human school which they could communicate to others. And Paul, from not only a professed, but a cruel and sanguinary enemy, being converted to a new man, proves, by his sudden and unlooked-for change, that he was constrained, by a command from heaven, to vindicate that doctrine which he had before opposed. Let these men deny that the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles; or, at least, let them dispute the credibility of the history; yet the fact itself loudly proclaims, that they were taught by the Spirit, who, though before despised as some of the meanest of the people, suddenly began to discourse in such a magnificent manner on the mysteries of heaven.

XII. Besides, there are also other very substantial reasons why the consent of the Church should have its weight. For it is not an unimportant consideration, that, since the publication of the Scripture, so many generations of men should have

agreed in voluntarily obeying it ; and that however Satan, together with the whole world, has endeavoured by strange methods to suppress or destroy it, or utterly to erase and obliterate it from the memory of man, yet it has always, like a palm-tree, risen superior to all opposition, and remained invincible. Indeed, there has scarcely ever been a sophist or orator of more than common abilities, who has not tried his strength in opposing it ; yet they have all availed nothing. All the powers of the earth have armed themselves for its destruction ; but their attempts have all evaporated into smoke. How could it have so firmly resisted attacks on every quarter, if it had been supported only by human power ? Indeed, an additional proof of its Divine origin arises from this very circumstance, that, notwithstanding all the strenuous resistance of men, it has, by its own power, risen superior to every danger. Moreover, not one city, or one nation, only, has conspired to receive and embrace it ; but, as far as the world extends, it has obtained its authority by the holy consent of various nations, who agreed in nothing besides. And as such an agreement of minds, so widely distant in place, and so completely dissimilar in manners and opinions, ought to have great influence with us, since it is plain that it was effected only by the power of heaven, so it acquires no small weight from a consideration of the piety of those who unite in this agreement ; not indeed of all, but of those, who, it hath pleased the Lord, should shine as luminaries in his Church.

XIII. Now, with what unlimited confidence should we submit to that doctrine, which we see confirmed and witnessed by the blood of so many saints ! Having once received it, they hesitated not, with intrepid boldness, and even with great alacrity, to die in its defence : transmitted to us with such a pledge, how should we not receive it with a firm and unshaken conviction ? Is it therefore no small confirmation of the Scripture, that it has been sealed with the blood of so many martyrs ? especially when we consider that they died to bear testimony to their faith, not through intemperate fanaticism, as is sometimes the case with men of erroneous minds, but through a firm and constant, yet sober zeal for God. There are other reasons, and those neither few nor weak, by which the native dignity and authority of the Scripture are not only maintained in the minds of the pious, but also completely vindicated against the subtleties of calumniators ; but such as alone are not sufficient to produce firm faith in it, till the heavenly Father, discovering his own power therein, places its authority beyond all controversy. Wherefore the Scripture will then only be effectual to produce the saving knowledge of God, when the certainty of it shall be founded on the internal persuasion of the Holy Spirit. Thus

those human testimonies, which contribute to its confirmation, will not be useless, if they follow that first and principal proof, as secondary aids to our imbecility. But those persons betray great folly, who wish it to be demonstrated to infidels that the Scripture is the word of God, which cannot be known without faith. Augustine therefore justly observes, (*m*) that piety and peace of mind ought to precede, in order that a man may understand somewhat of such great subjects.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FANATICISM WHICH DISCARDS THE SCRIPTURE, UNDER THE PRETENCE OF RESORTING TO IMMEDIATE REVELATIONS, SUBVERSIVE OF EVERY PRINCIPLE OF PIETY.

PERSONS who, abandoning the Scripture, imagine to themselves some other way of approaching to God, must be considered as not so much misled by error as actuated by frenzy. For there have lately arisen some unsteady men, who, haughtily pretending to be taught by the Spirit, reject all reading themselves, and deride the simplicity of those who still attend to (what they style) the dead and killing letter. But I would ask them, what spirit that is, by whose inspiration they are elevated to such a sublimity, as to dare to despise the doctrine of the Scripture, as puerile and mean. For, if they answer that it is the Spirit of Christ, how ridiculous is such an assurance! for that the apostles of Christ, and other believers in the primitive Church, were illuminated by no other Spirit, I think they will concede. But not one of them learned, from his teaching, to condemn the Divine word; they were rather filled with higher reverence for it, as their writings abundantly testify. This had been predicted by the mouth of Isaiah. For where he says, "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, for ever," (*n*) he does not confine people under the old dispensation to the external letter, as though they were children learning to read, but declares, that it will be the true and complete felicity of the new Church, under the reign of Christ, to be governed by the word of God, as well as by his Spirit.

(*m*) Lib. de Util. Credend.

(*n*) Isaiah lix. 21.

Whence we infer, that these persons are guilty of detestable sacrilege, in disjoining these two things, which the prophet has connected in an inviolable union. Again; Paul, after he had been caught up into the third heaven, did not cease to study the doctrine of the law and the prophets; as he also exhorted Timothy, a teacher of more than common excellence, to "give attendance to reading." (*o*) And worthy of remembrance is his eulogium on the Scripture, that it "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect." (*p*) How diabolical, then, is that madness which pretends that the use of the Scripture is only transient and temporary, which guides the sons of God to the highest point of perfection! I would also ask them another question — whether they have imbibed a different spirit from that which the Lord promised to his disciples? Great as their infatuation is, I do not think them fanatical enough to hazard such an avowal. But what kind of Spirit did he promise? One, truly, who should "not speak of himself," (*q*) but suggest and instil into their minds those things which he had orally delivered. The office of the Spirit, then, which is promised to us, is not to feign new and unheard of revelations, or to coin a new system of doctrine, which would seduce us from the received doctrine of the Gospel, but to seal to our minds the same doctrine which the Gospel delivers.

II. Hence we readily understand that it is incumbent on us diligently to read and attend to the Scripture, if we would receive any advantage or satisfaction from the Spirit of God; (thus also Peter (*r*) commends those who studiously attended to the doctrine of the prophets, which yet might be supposed to have retired after the light of the Gospel was risen;) but, on the contrary, that if any spirit, neglecting the wisdom of the word of God, obtrude on us another doctrine, he ought justly to be suspected of vanity and falsehood. For, as Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, what authority will the Spirit have with us, unless we can distinguish him by the most certain criterion? We find him clearly designated, indeed, in the word of the Lord; but these unhappy men are fondly bent on delusion, even to their own destruction, seeking a spirit rather from themselves than from him. But they plead, that it is unworthy of the Spirit of God, to whom all things ought to be subject, to be made subject to the Scripture; as though it were ignominious to the Holy Spirit to be every where equal and uniform, in all things invariably consistent with himself. If he were to be conformed to the rules of

(*o*) 1 Tim. iv. 13.

(*p*) 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

(*q*) John xvi. 13.

(*r*) 2 Pet. i. 19.

men, or of angels, or of any other beings, I grant he might then be considered as degraded, or even reduced to a state of servitude; but while he is compared with himself, and considered in himself, who will assert that he is thereby injured? This is bringing him to the test of examination. I confess it is. But it is the way which he has chosen for the confirmation of his majesty among us. We ought to be satisfied, as soon as he communicates himself to us. But, lest the spirit of Satan should insinuate himself under his name, he chooses to be recognized by us from his image, which he hath impressed in the Scriptures. He is the author of the Scriptures: he cannot be mutable and inconsistent with himself. He must therefore perpetually remain such as he has there discovered himself to be. This is not disgraceful to him; unless we esteem it honourable for him to alter and degenerate from himself.

III. But their cavilling objection, that we depend on "the letter that killeth," shows, that they have not escaped the punishment due to the despisers of the Scripture. For it is sufficiently evident, that Paul is there contending against the false apostles, (*s*) who, recommending the law to the exclusion of Christ, were seducing the people from the blessings of the New Covenant, in which the Lord engages to engrave his law in the minds of believers, and to inscribe it on their hearts. The letter therefore is dead, and the law of the Lord slays the readers of it, where it is separated from the grace of Christ, and only sounds in the ears, without affecting the heart. But if it be efficaciously impressed on our hearts by the Spirit, — if it exhibit Christ, — it is the word of life, "converting the soul, making wise the simple," &c. (*t*) But in the same place the Apostle also calls his preaching "the ministration of the Spirit;" (*v*) doubtless intending, that the Holy Spirit so adheres to his own truth, which he hath expressed in the Scriptures, that he only displays and exerts his power where the word is received with due reverence and honour. Nor is this repugnant to what I before asserted, that the word itself has not much certainty with us, unless when confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit. For the Lord hath established a kind of mutual connection between the certainty of his word and of his Spirit; so that our minds are filled with a solid reverence for the word, when by the light of the Spirit we are enabled therein to behold the Divine countenance; and, on the other hand, without the least fear of mistake, we gladly receive the Spirit, when we recognize him in his image, that is, in the word. This is the true state of the case. God did

(*s*) 2 Cor. iii. 6.(*t*) Psalm xix. 7.(*v*) 2 Cor. iii. 8.

not publish his word to mankind for the sake of momentary ostentation, with a design to destroy or annul it immediately on the advent of the Spirit; but he afterwards sent the same Spirit, by whose agency he had dispensed his word, to complete his work by an efficacious confirmation of that word. In this manner Christ opened the understanding of his two disciples; (*w*) not that, rejecting the Scriptures, they might be wise enough of themselves, but that they might understand the Scriptures. So when Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to "quench not the Spirit," (*x*) he does not lead them to empty speculations independent of the word; for he immediately adds, "despise not prophesyings;" clearly intimating, that the light of the Spirit is extinguished when prophecies fall into contempt. What answer can be given to these things, by those proud fanatics, who think themselves possessed of the only valuable illumination, when, securely neglecting and forsaking the Divine word, they, with equal confidence and temerity, greedily embrace every reverie which their distempered imaginations may have conceived? A very different sobriety becomes the children of God; who, while they are sensible that, exclusively of the Spirit of God, they are utterly destitute of the light of truth, yet are not ignorant that the word is the instrument, by which the Lord dispenses to believers the illumination of his Spirit. For they know no other Spirit than that who dwelt in and spake by the apostles; by whose oracles they are continually called to the hearing of the word.

CHAPTER X.

ALL IDOLATROUS WORSHIP DISCOURTENANCED IN THE SCRIPTURE,
BY ITS EXCLUSIVE OPPOSITION OF THE TRUE GOD TO ALL THE
FICTITIOUS DEITIES OF THE HEATHEN.

BUT, since we have shown that the knowledge of God, which is otherwise exhibited without obscurity in the structure of the world, and in all the creatures, is yet more familiarly and clearly unfolded in the word, it will be useful to examine, whether the representation, which the Lord gives us of himself in the Scripture, agrees with the portraiture which he had before been pleased to delineate in his works. This is indeed an extensive subject, if we intended to dwell on a particular

(*w*) Luke xxiv. 27, &c.

(*x*) 1 Thess. v. 19.

discussion of it. But I shall content myself with suggesting some hints, by which the minds of the pious may learn what ought to be their principal objects of investigation in Scripture concerning God, and may be directed to a certain end in that inquiry. I do not yet allude to the peculiar covenant which distinguished the descendants of Abraham from the rest of the nations. For in receiving, by gratuitous adoption, those who were his enemies into the number of his children, God even then manifested himself as a Redeemer; but we are still treating of that knowledge which relates to the creation of the world, without ascending to Christ the Mediator. But though it will be useful soon to cite some passages from the New Testament, (since that also demonstrates the power of God in the creation, and his providence in the conservation of the world,) yet I wish the reader to be apprized of the point now intended to be discussed, that he may not pass the limits which the subject prescribes. At present, then, let it suffice to understand how God, the former of heaven and earth, governs the world which he hath made. Both his paternal goodness, and the beneficent inclinations of his will, are every where celebrated; and examples are given of his severity, which discover him to be the righteous punisher of iniquities, especially where his forbearance produces no salutary effects upon the obstinate.

II. In some places, indeed, we are favoured with more explicit descriptions, which exhibit to our view an exact representation of his genuine countenance. For Moses, in the description which he gives of it, certainly appears to have intended a brief comprehension of all that it was possible for men to know concerning him — “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children.” (y) Where we may observe, first, the assertion of his eternity and self-existence, in that magnificent name, which is twice repeated; and secondly, the celebration of his attributes, giving us a description, not of what he is in himself, but of what he is to us, that our knowledge of him may consist rather in a lively perception, than in vain and airy speculation. Here we find an enumeration of the same perfections which, as we have remarked, are illustriously displayed both in heaven and on earth — clemency, goodness, mercy, justice, judgment, and truth. For power is comprised in the word *Elohim*, God. The prophets distin-

(y) *Exod. xxxiv. 6.*

guish him by the same epithets, when they intend a complete exhibition of his holy name. But, to avoid the necessity of quoting many passages, let us content ourselves at present with referring to one Psalm; (z) which contains such an accurate summary of all his perfections, that nothing seems to be omitted. And yet it contains nothing but what may be known from a contemplation of the creatures. Thus, by the teaching of experience, we perceive God to be just what he declares himself in his word. In Jeremiah, where he announces in what characters he will be known by us, he gives a description, not so full, but to the same effect — “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.” (a) These three things it is certainly of the highest importance for us to know — mercy, in which alone consists all our salvation; judgment, which is executed on the wicked every day, and awaits them in a still heavier degree to eternal destruction; righteousness, by which the faithful are preserved, and most graciously supported. When you understand these things, the prophecy declares that you have abundant reason for glorying in God. Nor is this representation chargeable with an omission of his truth, or his power, or his holiness, or his goodness. For how could we have that knowledge, which is here required, of his righteousness, mercy, and judgment, unless it were supported by his inflexible veracity? And how could we believe that he governed the world in judgment and justice, if we were ignorant of his power? And whence proceeds his mercy, but from his goodness? If all his ways, then, are mercy, judgment, and righteousness, holiness also must be conspicuously displayed in them. Moreover, the knowledge of God, which is afforded us in the Scriptures, is designed for the same end as that which we derive from the creatures: it invites us first to the fear of God, and then to confidence in him; that we may learn to honour him with perfect innocence of life, and sincere obedience to his will, and to place all our dependence on his goodness.

III. But here I intend to comprise a summary of the general doctrine. And, first, let the reader observe, that the Scripture, in order to direct us to the true God, expressly excludes and rejects all the gods of the heathen; because, in almost all ages, religion has been generally corrupted. It is true, indeed, that the name of one supreme God has been universally known and celebrated. For those who used to worship a multitude of deities, whenever they spake according

(z) Psalm cxlv.

(a) Jer. ix. 24.

to the genuine sense of nature, used simply the name of God, in the singular number, as though they were contented with one God. And this was wisely remarked by Justin Martyr, who for this purpose wrote a book *On the Monarchy of God*, in which he demonstrates, from numerous testimonies, that the unity of God was a principle universally impressed on the hearts of men. Tertullian also proves the same point from the common phraseology. (b) But since all men, without exception, have by their own vanity been drawn into erroneous notions, and so their understandings have become vain, all their natural perception of the Divine unity has only served to render them inexcusable. For even the wisest of them evidently betray the vagrant uncertainty of their minds, when they wish for some god to assist them, and in their vows call upon unknown and fabulous deities. Besides, in imagining the existence of many natures in God, though they did not entertain such absurd notions as the ignorant vulgar concerning Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Minerva, and the rest, they were themselves by no means exempt from the delusions of Satan; and, as we have already remarked, whatever subterfuges their ingenuity has invented, none of the philosophers can exculpate themselves from the crime of revolting from God by the corruption of his truth. For this reason Habakkuk, after condemning all idols, bids us to seek "the Lord in his holy temple," (c) that the faithful might acknowledge no other God than Jehovah, who had revealed himself in his word.

CHAPTER XI.

UNLAWFULNESS OF ASCRIBING TO GOD A VISIBLE FORM. ALL IDOLATRY A DEFECTION FROM THE TRUE GOD.

Now, as the Scripture, in consideration of the ignorance and dulness of the human understanding, generally speaks in the plainest manner, — where it intends to discriminate between the true God and all false gods, it principally contrasts him with idols; not that it may sanction the more ingenious and plausible systems of the philosophers, but that it may better detect the folly and even madness of the world in researches concerning God, as long as every one adheres to his own speculations. That exclusive definition, therefore, which

(b) Lib. de Idolol. Vid. Aug. Epist. 43 et 44.

(c) Hab. ii. 20.

every where occurs, reduces to nothing whatever notions of the Deity men may form in their own imaginations; since God alone is a sufficient witness concerning himself. In the mean time, since the whole world has been seized with such brutal stupidity, as to be desirous of visible representations of the Deity, and thus to fabricate gods of wood, stone, gold, silver, and other inanimate and corruptible materials, we ought to hold this as a certain principle, that, whenever any image is made as a representation of God, the Divine glory is corrupted by an impious falsehood. Therefore God, in the law, after having asserted the glory of Deity to belong exclusively to himself, when he intends to show what worship he approves or rejects, immediately adds, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness." In these words he forbids us to attempt a representation of him in any visible figure; and briefly enumerates all the forms by which superstition had already begun to change his truth into a lie. For the Persians, we know, worshipped the sun; and the foolish heathen made for themselves as many gods as they saw stars in the heavens. There was scarcely an animal, indeed, which the Egyptians did not consider as an image of God. The Greeks appeared wiser than the rest, because they worshipped the Deity under the human form. (d) But God compares not idols with each other, as though one were better or worse than another; but rejects, without a single exception, all statues, pictures, and other figures, in which idolaters imagined that he would be near them.

II. This it is easy to infer from the reasons which he annexes to the prohibition. First, in the writings of Moses: "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude, on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure," &c. (e) We see how expressly God opposes his "voice" to every "manner of similitude," to show, that whoever desires visible representations of him, is guilty of departing from him. It will be sufficient to refer to one of the Prophets, Isaiah, (f) who insists more than all the others on this argument, that the Divine Majesty is dishonoured by mean and absurd fiction, when he that is incorporeal is likened to a corporeal form; he that is invisible, to a visible image; he that is a spirit, to inanimate matter; and he that fills immensity, to a log of wood, a small stone, or a lump of gold. Paul also reasons in the same manner: "Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we

(d) Maximus Tyrius, Plat. Serm. 38.

(e) Deut. iv. 15.

(f) Isaiah xl. 18; xli. 7, 29; xlv. 5, &c.

ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." (*g*) Whence it follows, that whatever statues are erected, or images painted, to represent God, they are only displeasing to him, as being so many insults to the Divine Majesty. And why should we wonder at the Holy Spirit thundering forth such oracles from heaven, since he compels the blind and wretched idolaters to make a similar confession on earth? Well known is the complaint of Seneca, which is cited by Augustine: "They dedicate (says he) the vilest and meanest materials to represent the sacred, immortal, and inviolable gods; and give them some a human form, and some a brutal one, and some a double sex, and different bodies; and they confer the name of gods upon images which, if animated, would be accounted monsters." Hence it further appears that the pretence set up by the advocates for idols, that they were forbidden to the Jews because they were prone to superstition, is only a frivolous cavil, to evade the force of the argument. As if truly that were peculiarly applicable to one nation, which God deduces from his eternal existence, and the invariable order of nature! Besides, Paul was not addressing the Jews, but the Athenians, when he refuted the error of making any similitude of God.

III. Sometimes indeed God hath discovered his presence by certain signs, so that he was said to be seen "face to face;" (*h*) but all the signs which he ever adopted, were well calculated for the instruction of men, and afforded clear intimations of his incomprehensible essence. For "the cloud, and the smoke, and the flame," (*i*) though they were symbols of celestial glory, nevertheless operated as a restraint on the minds of all, to prevent their attempting to penetrate any further. Wherefore even Moses (to whom he manifested himself more familiarly than to any other) obtained not by his prayers a sight of the face of God, but received this answer: "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see my face and live." (*k*) The Holy Spirit once appeared in the form of a dove; (*l*) but, as he presently disappeared again, who does not perceive that by this momentary symbol the faithful are taught that they should believe the Spirit to be invisible? that, being content with his power and grace, they might make no external representation of him. The appearances of God in the human form were preludes to his future manifestation in Christ. Therefore the Jews were not permitted to make this a pretext for erecting a symbol of Deity in the figure of a man. "The mercy seat" (*m*) also, from which, under the law, God displayed the presence of his power, was so constructed, as to suggest that the best contemplation of the

(*g*) Acts xvii. 29.(*i*) Deut. iv. 11.(*l*) Matt. iii. 16.(*h*) Exod. xxxiii. 11.(*k*) Exod. xxxiii. 20.(*m*) Exod. xxv. 17, 18, &c

Divine Being is when the mind is transported beyond itself with admiration. For "the cherubim" covered it with their extended wings; the veil was spread before it; and the place itself was sufficiently concealed by its secluded situation. It is manifestly unreasonable therefore to endeavour to defend images of God and of the saints, by the example of those cherubim. For, pray, what was signified by those little images but that images are not calculated to represent the Divine mysteries? since they were formed in such a manner as, by veiling the mercy seat with their wings, to prevent not only the eyes, but all the human senses, from prying into God, and so to restrain all temerity. Moreover, the Prophet describes the seraphim whom he saw in a vision, as having "their faces covered;" (n) to signify, that the splendour of the Divine glory is so great, that even the angels themselves cannot steadfastly behold it; and the faint sparks of it, which shine in the angels, are concealed from our view. The cherubim, however, of which we are now speaking, are acknowledged by all persons of sound judgment to have been peculiar to the old state of tutelage under the legal dispensation. To adduce them, therefore, as examples for the imitation of the present age, is quite absurd. For that puerile period, as I may call it, for which such rudiments were appointed, is now past. And, indeed, it is a shameful consideration, that heathen writers are more expert interpreters of the Divine law than the papists. Juvenal reproaches and ridicules the Jews for worshipping the white clouds and Deity of heaven. This language, indeed, is perverse and impious; but in denying that there was any image of God among them, he speaks with more truth than the papists, who idly pretend that there was some visible figure of him. But as that nation frequently broke out into idolatry, with great and sudden impetuosity, resembling the violent ebullition of water from a large spring, hence let us learn the strong propensity of the human mind to idolatry, lest, imputing to the Jews a crime common to all, we should be fascinated by the allurements of sin, and sleep the sleep of death.

IV. To the same purpose is that passage, "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands;" (o) for the Prophet concludes, from the very materials, that they are no gods, whose images are made of gold or of silver; and takes it for granted, that every conception we form of the Deity, merely from our own understandings, is a foolish imagination. He mentions gold and silver rather than clay or stone, that the splendour or the value of the materials may procure no reverence for the idols. But he concludes in general, that nothing is more improbable, than that gods should be manufactured

(n) Isaiah vi. 2.

(o) Psalm cxxxv. 15.

from any inanimate matter. At the same time he insists equally on another point—that it is presumption and madness in mortal men, who are every moment in danger of losing the fleeting breath which they draw, to dare to confer upon idols the honour due to God. Man is constrained to confess that he is a creature of a day, and yet he will have a piece of metal to be worshipped as a god, of the deity of which he is the author; for whence did idols originate, but in the will of men? There is much propriety in that sarcasm of a heathen poet, who represents one of their idols as saying, “Formerly, I was the trunk of a wild fig-tree, a useless log; when the artificer, after hesitating whether he would make me a stool or a deity, at length determined that I should be a god.” (*p*)

A poor mortal, forsooth, who is, as it were, expiring almost every moment, will, by his workmanship, transfer to a dead stock the name and honour of God. But as that Epicurean, in his satirical effusions, has paid no respect to any religion, — leaving this sarcasm, and others of the same kind, we should be stung and penetrated by the rebuke which the Prophet (*q*) has given to the extreme stupidity of those, who, with the same wood, make a fire to warm themselves, heat an oven for baking bread, roast or boil their meat, and fabricate a god, before which they prostrate themselves, to address their humble supplications. In another place, therefore, he not only pronounces them transgressors of the law, but reproaches them for not having learned from the foundations of the earth; (*r*) since, in reality, there is nothing more unreasonable than the thought of contracting the infinite and incomprehensible God within the compass of five feet. And yet this monstrous abomination, which is manifestly repugnant to the order of nature, experience demonstrates to be natural to man. It must be further observed, that idols are frequently stigmatized as being the works of men’s hands, unsanctioned by Divine authority; in order to establish this principle, that all modes of worship which are merely of human invention, are detestable. The Psalmist aggravates this madness, forasmuch as men implore the aid of dead and insensible things, who are imbued with understanding to know that all things are directed solely by the power of God. But since the corruption of nature carries all nations in general, and each individual in particular, to such an excess of frenzy, the Spirit at length thunders out this direful imprecation: “Let those that make them be like unto them and every one that trusteth in them.” (*s*) Let it be observed, that all similitudes are equally as much forbidden as graven images; which refutes the foolish subterfuge of the Greeks; for they think themselves quite safe, if they

(*p*) Hor. Sat. lib. 1, 8.
 (*q*) Isaiah xlv. 9—20.

(*r*) Isaiah xl. 21.
 (*s*) Psalm cxv. 8.

make no sculpture of Deity, while in pictures they indulge greater liberty than any other nations. But the Lord prohibits every representation of him, whether made by the statuary, or by any other artificer, because all similitudes are criminal and insulting to the Divine Majesty.

V. I know that it is a very common observation, that images are the books of the illiterate. Gregory said so; but very different is the decision of the Spirit of God, in whose school had Gregory been taught, he would never have made such an assertion. For, since Jeremiah pronounces that "the stock is a doctrine of vanities," (*t*) since Habakkuk represents "a molten image" as "a teacher of lies," (*v*)—certainly the general doctrine to be gathered from these passages is, that whatever men learn respecting God from images is equally frivolous and false. If any one object, that the Prophets only reprehended those who abuse images to the impious purposes of superstition,—that indeed I grant; but affirm also, what is evident to every one, that they utterly condemn what is assumed by the papists as an indubitable axiom, that images are substitutes for books. For they contrast images with the true God, as contraries, which can never agree. This comparison, I say, is laid down in those passages which I have just cited; that, since there is only one true God, whom the Jews worshipped, there can be no visible figures made, to serve as representations of the Divine Being, without falsehood and criminality; and all who seek the knowledge of God from such figures are under a miserable delusion. Were it not true, that all knowledge of God, sought from images, is corrupt and fallacious, it would not be so uniformly condemned by the Prophets. This at least must be granted to us, that, when we maintain the vanity and fallaciousness of the attempts of men to make visible representations of God, we do no other than recite the express declarations of the Prophets.

VI. Read likewise what has been written on this subject by Lactantius and Eusebius, who hesitate not to assume as a certainty, that all those whose images are to be seen, were mortal men. Augustine also confidently asserts the unlawfulness, not only of worshipping images, but even of erecting any with reference to God. Nor does he advance any thing different from what had, many years before, been decreed by the Elibertine council, the thirty-sixth chapter of which is as follows: "It hath been decreed, that no pictures be had in the churches, and that what is worshipped or adored be not painted on the walls." But most remarkable is what Augustine elsewhere cites from Varro, and to the truth of which he

(*t*) Jer. x. 8.(*v*) Hab. ii. 18.

subscribes — “That they who first introduced images of the gods, removed fear and added error.” If this had been a mere assertion of Varro alone, it might have perhaps but little authority; yet it should justly fill us with shame, that a heathen, groping as it were in the dark, attained so much light as to perceive that corporeal representations were unworthy of the Divine Majesty, being calculated to diminish the fear of God, and to increase error among mankind. The fact itself demonstrates this to have been spoken with equal truth and wisdom; but Augustine, having borrowed it from Varro, advances it as his own opinion. And first he observes that the most ancient errors concerning God, in which men were involved, did not originate from images, but were increased by them, as by the superaddition of new materials. He next explains that the fear of God is thereby diminished, and even destroyed; since the foolish, ridiculous, and absurd fabrication of idols would easily bring his Divinity into contempt. Of the truth of this second remark, I sincerely wish that we had not such proofs in our own experience. Whoever, therefore, desires to be rightly instructed, he must learn from some other quarter than from images, what is to be known concerning God.

VII. If the papists have any shame, let them no longer use this subterfuge, that images are the books of the illiterate; which is so clearly refuted by numerous testimonies from Scripture. Yet, though I should concede this point to them, it would avail them but little in defence of their idols. What monsters they obtrude in the place of Deity is well known. But what they call the pictures or statues of their saints — what are they but examples of the most abandoned luxury and obscenity? which if any one were desirous of imitating, he would deserve corporal punishment. Even prostitutes in brothels are to be seen in more chaste and modest attire, than those images in their temples, which they wish to be accounted images of virgins. Nor do they clothe the martyrs in habits at all more becoming. Let them adorn their idols, then, with some small degree of modesty, that the pretence of their being books of some holiness, if not less false, may be less impudent. But even then, we will reply, that this is not the method to be adopted in sacred places for the instruction of the faithful, whom God will have taught a very different doctrine from any that can be learned from such insignificant trifles. He hath commanded one common doctrine to be there proposed to all, in the preaching of his word, and in his sacred mysteries; to which they betray great inattention of mind, who are carried about by their eyes to the contemplation of idols. Whom, then, do the papists call illiterate, whose ig-

norance will suffer them to be taught only by images? Those, truly, whom the Lord acknowledges as his disciples; whom he honours with the revelation of his heavenly philosophy; whom he will have instructed in the healthful mysteries of his kingdom. I confess, indeed, as things are now circumstanced, that there are at present not a few who cannot bear to be deprived of such books. But whence arises this stupidity, but from being defrauded of that teaching which alone is adapted to their instruction? In fact, those who presided over the churches, resigned to idols the office of teaching, for no other reason but because they were themselves dumb. Paul testifies, that in the true preaching of this gospel, Christ is "evidently set forth," and, as it were, "crucified before our eyes." (*w*) To what purpose, then, was the erection of so many crosses of wood and stone, silver and gold, every where in the temples, if it had been fully and faithfully inculcated, that Christ died that he might bear our curse on the cross, expiate our sins by the sacrifice of his body, cleanse us by his blood, and, in a word, reconcile us to God the Father? From this simple declaration they might learn more than from a thousand crosses of wood or stone; for perhaps the avaricious fix their minds and their eyes more tenaciously on the gold and silver crosses, than on any part of the Divine word.

VIII. Respecting the origin of idols, the generally received opinion agrees with what is asserted in the book of Wisdom; (*x*) namely, that the first authors of them were persons who paid this honour to the dead, from a superstitious reverence for their memory. I grant that this perverse custom was very ancient, and deny not that it greatly contributed to increase the rage of mankind after idolatry; nevertheless, I cannot concede that it was the first cause of that evil. For it appears from Moses, that idols were in use long before the introduction of that ostentatious consecration of the images of the dead, which is frequently mentioned by profane writers. When he relates that Rachel stole her father's idols, (*y*) he speaks as of a common corruption. Whence we may infer, that the mind of man is, if I may be allowed the expression, a perpetual manufactory of idols. After the deluge, there was, as it were, a regeneration of the world; but not many years elapsed before men fabricated gods according to their own fancy. And it is probable, that while the holy patriarch was yet alive, his posterity were addicted to idolatry, so that, with the bitterest grief, he might, with his own eyes, behold the earth which God had lately purged from its corruptions by such a dreadful judgment,

(*w*) Gal. iii. 1.(*x*) Wisdom xiv. 15.(*y*) Gen. xxxi. 19.

again polluted with idols. For Terah and Nachor, before the birth of Abraham, were worshippers of false gods, as is asserted by Joshua. (z) Since the posterity of Shem so speedily degenerated, what opinion must we entertain of the descendants of Ham, who had already been cursed in their father? The true state of the case is, that the mind of man, being full of pride and temerity, dares to conceive of God according to its own standard; and, being sunk in stupidity, and immersed in profound ignorance, imagines a vain and ridiculous phantom instead of God. These evils are followed by another; men attempt to express in the work of their hands such a deity as they have imagined in their minds. The mind then begets the idol, and the hand brings it forth. The example of the Israelites proves this to have been the origin of idolatry, namely, that men believe not God to be among them, unless he exhibit some external signs of his presence. "As for this Moses," they said, "we wot not what is become of him; make us gods which shall go before us." (a) They knew, indeed, that there was a God, whose power they had experienced in so many miracles; but they had no confidence in his being present with them, unless they could see some corporeal symbol of his countenance, as a testimony of their Divine Guide. They wished, therefore, to understand, from the image going before them, that God was the leader of their march. Daily experience teaches, that the flesh is never satisfied, till it has obtained some image, resembling itself, in which it may be foolishly gratified, as an image of God. In almost all ages, from the creation of the world, in obedience to this stupid propensity, men have erected visible representations, in which they believed God to be presented to their carnal eyes.

IX. Such an invention is immediately attended with adoration; for when men supposed that they saw God in images, they also worshipped him in them. At length, both their eyes and their minds being wholly confined to them, they began to grow more stupid, and to admire them, as though they possessed some inherent divinity. Now, it is plain that men did not rush into the worship of images, till they had imbibed some very gross opinion respecting them; not, indeed, that they believed them to be gods, but they imagined that something of Divinity resided in them. When you prostrate yourself, therefore, in adoration of an image, whether you suppose it to represent God or a creature, you are already fascinated with superstition. For this reason the Lord hath prohibited, not only the erection of statues made as representations of him, but also the consecration of any inscriptions or monuments to

(z) Joshua xxiv. 2.

(a) Exod. xxxii. 1.

stand as objects of worship. For the same reason, also, another point is annexed to the precept in the law concerning adoration. For as soon as men have made a visible figure of God, they attach Divine power to it. Such is the stupidity of men, that they confine God to any image which they make to represent him, and therefore cannot but worship it. Nor is it of any importance, whether they worship simply the idol, or God in the idol; it is always idolatry, when Divine honours are paid to an idol, under any pretence whatsoever. And as God will not be worshipped in a superstitious or idolatrous manner, whatever is conferred on idols is taken from him. Let this be considered by those who seek such miserable pretexts for the defence of that execrable idolatry, with which, for many ages, true religion has been overwhelmed and subverted. The images, they say, are not considered as gods. Neither were the Jews so thoughtless as not to remember, that it was God by whose hand they had been conducted out of Egypt, before they made the calf. But when Aaron said that those were the gods by whom they had been liberated from Egypt, they boldly assented; (b) signifying, doubtless, that they would keep in remembrance, that God himself was their deliverer, while they could see him going before them in the calf. Nor can we believe the heathen to have been so stupid, as to conceive that God was no other than wood and stone. For they changed the images at pleasure, but always retained in their minds the same gods; and there were many images for one god; nor did they imagine to themselves gods in proportion to the multitude of images: besides, they daily consecrated new images, but without supposing that they made new gods. Read the excuses, which, Augustine says, (c) were alleged by the idolaters of the age in which he lived. When they were charged with idolatry, the vulgar replied, that they worshipped, not the visible figure, but the Divinity that invisibly dwelt in it. But they, whose religion was, as he expresses himself, more refined, said, that they worshipped neither the image, nor the spirit represented by it; but that in the corporeal figure they beheld a sign of that which they ought to worship. What is to be inferred from this, but that all idolaters, whether Jewish or Gentile, have been guided by the notion which I have mentioned? Not content with a spiritual knowledge of God, they thought that they should receive more clear and familiar impressions of him by means of images. After they had once pleased themselves with such a preposterous representation of God, they ceased not from being deluded with new fallacies, till they imagined that God

(b) *Exod. xxxii. 4—6.*(c) *In Psalm cxiii.*

displayed his power in images. Nevertheless, the Jews were persuaded that, under such images, they worshipped the eternal God, the one true Lord of heaven and earth; and the heathen, that they worshipped their false gods, whom they pretended to be inhabitants of heaven.

X. Those who deny that this has been done in time past, and even within our own remembrance, assert an impudent falsehood. For why do they prostrate themselves before images? And when about to pray, why do they turn themselves towards them, as towards the ears of God? For it is true, as Augustine says, (d) "That no man prays or worships thus, looking on an image, who is not impressed with an opinion that he shall be heard by it, and a hope that it will do for him as he desires." Why is there so great a difference between images of the same god, that one is passed by with little or no respect, and another is honoured in the most solemn manner? Why do they fatigue themselves with votive pilgrimages, in going to see images resembling those which they have at home? Why do they at this day fight, even to slaughter and destruction, in defence of them, as of their country and religion, so that they could part with the only true God more easily than with their idols? Yet I am not here enumerating the gross errors of the vulgar, which are almost infinite, and occupy nearly the hearts of all; I only relate what they themselves allege, when they are most anxious to exculpate themselves from idolatry. "We never," say they, "call them our gods." Nor did the Jews or heathen in ancient times call them their gods; and yet the Prophets, in all their writings, were constantly accusing them of fornication with wood and stone, only on account of such things as are daily practised by those who wish to be thought Christians; that is, for worshipping God, by corporeal adoration before figures of wood or stone.

XI. I am neither ignorant, nor desirous of concealing, that they evade the charge by a more subtle distinction, which will soon be noticed more at large. They pretend that the reverence which they pay to images is *ειδωλοδουλεια*, (service of images,) but deny that it is *ειδωλαλατρηια* (worship of images.) For in this manner they express themselves, when they maintain, that the reverence which they call *dulia*, may be given to statues or pictures, without injury to God. They consider themselves, therefore, liable to no blame, while they are only the servants of their idols, and not worshippers of them; as though worship were not rather inferior to service. And yet, while they seek to shelter themselves under a Greek term, they contradict themselves in the most childish manner. For

(d) In Psalm cxiii.

since the Greek word *λατρευσιν* signifies nothing else but to worship, what they say is equivalent to a confession that they adore their images, but without adoration. Nor can they justly object, that I am trying to insnare them with words: they betray their own ignorance in their endeavours to raise a mist before the eyes of the simple. But, however eloquent they may be, they will never be able, by their rhetoric, to prove one and the same thing to be two different things. Let them point out, I say, a difference in fact, that they may be accounted different from ancient idolaters. For as an adulterer, or homicide, will not escape the imputation of guilt, by giving his crime a new and arbitrary name, so it is absurd that these persons should be exculpated by the subtle invention of a name, if they really differ in no respect from those idolaters whom they themselves are constrained to condemn. But their case is so far from being different from that of former idolaters, that the source of all the evil is a preposterous emulation, with which they have rivalled them by exercising their minds in contriving, and their hands in forming, visible symbols of the Deity.

XII. Nevertheless, I am not so scrupulous as to think that no images ought ever to be permitted. But since sculpture and painting are gifts of God, I wish for a pure and legitimate use of both; lest those things, which the Lord hath conferred on us for his glory and our benefit, be not only corrupted by preposterous abuse, but even perverted to our ruin. We think it unlawful to make any visible figure as a representation of God, because he hath himself forbidden it, and it cannot be done without detracting, in some measure, from his glory. Let it not be supposed that we are singular in this opinion; for that all sound writers have uniformly reprobated the practice, must be evident to persons conversant with their works. If, then, it be not lawful to make any corporeal representation of God, much less will it be lawful to worship it for God, or to worship God in it. We conclude, therefore, that nothing should be painted and engraved but objects visible to our eyes: the Divine Majesty, which is far above the reach of human sight, ought not to be corrupted by unseemly figures. The subjects of those arts consist partly of histories and transactions, partly of images and corporeal forms, without reference to any transactions. The former are of some use in information or recollection; the latter, as far as I see, can furnish nothing but amusement. And yet it is evident, that almost all the images, which have hitherto been set up in the churches, have been of this latter description. Hence it may be seen, that they were placed there, not with judgment and discrimination, but from a foolish and inconsiderate passion for them. I say nothing here of the

impropriety and indecency conspicuous in most of them, and the wanton licentiousness displayed in them by the painters and statuaries, at which I have before hinted: I only assert, that even if they were intrinsically faultless, still they would be altogether unavailing for the purposes of instruction.

XIII. But, passing over that difference also, let us consider, as we proceed, whether it be expedient to have any images at all in Christian temples, either descriptive of historical events, or representative of human forms. In the first place, if the authority of the ancient Church have any influence with us, let us remember, that for about five hundred years, while religion continued in a more prosperous state, and purer doctrine prevailed, the Christian churches were generally without images. They were then first introduced, therefore, to ornament the churches, when the purity of the ministry had begun to degenerate. I will not dispute what was the reason which influenced the first authors of them; but if you compare one age with another, you will see that they were much declined from the integrity of those who had no images. Who can suppose, that those holy fathers would have permitted the Church to remain so long destitute of what they judged useful and salutary for it? The fact was, that, instead of omitting them through ignorance or negligence, they perceived them to be of little or no use, but, on the contrary, pregnant with much danger; and, therefore, intentionally and wisely rejected them. This is asserted in express terms by Augustine: "When they are fixed," says he, "in those places in an honourable elevation, to attract the attention of those who are praying and sacrificing, though they are destitute of sense and life, yet, by the very similitude of living members and senses, they affect weak minds, so that they appear to them to live and breathe," &c. (e) And in another place: "For that representation of members leads, and, as it were, constrains, the mind, which animates a body, to suppose that body to be endued with perception, which it sees to be very similar to its own," &c. And a little after: "Idols have more influence to bow down an unhappy soul, because they have a mouth, eyes, ears, and feet, than to correct it, because they neither speak, nor see, nor hear, nor walk." This indeed appears to be the reason of John's exhortation to "keep ourselves," not only from the worship of idols, but "from idols" themselves. And we have found it too true, that, through the horrible frenzy, which, almost to the total destruction of piety, hath heretofore possessed the world, as soon as images are set up in churches, there is, as it were, a standard of idol-

(e) Epist. 49. De Civ. Dei. lib. iv. cap. 31.

atry erected; for the folly of mankind cannot refrain from immediately falling into idolatrous worship. But, even if the danger were less, yet, when I consider the use for which temples were designed, it appears to me extremely unworthy of their sanctity, to receive any other images, than those natural and expressive ones, which the Lord hath consecrated in his word; I mean Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord, and the other ceremonies, with which our eyes ought to be more attentively engaged, and more sensibly affected, than to require any others formed by human ingenuity. Behold the incomparable advantages of images! the loss of which, if you believe the papists, nothing can compensate.

XIV. The remarks already made on this subject, I think, would be sufficient, if it were not necessary to take some notice of the Council of Nice; not that very celebrated one, which was convened by Constantine the Great, but that which was held about eight hundred years ago, by the command, and under the auspices, of the Empress Irene. For that Council decreed, not only that images should be had in churches, but also that they should be worshipped. And, notwithstanding what I have advanced, the authority of the Council would raise a strong prejudice on the contrary side. Though, to confess the truth, I am not much concerned at this, as I am to show the reader their extreme madness, whose fondness for images exceeded any thing that was becoming in Christians. But let us despatch this point first: the present advocates for the use of images, allege the authority of that Nicene Council in their defence. There is a book extant, written in refutation of this practice, under the name of Charlemagne; which, from the diction, we may conclude was composed at the same time. In this work are recited the opinions of the bishops who attended the Council, and the arguments they used in the controversy. John, the delegate of the Eastern churches, said, "God created man in his own image;" and hence he inferred that we ought to have images. The same prelate thought that images were recommended to us by this sentence: "Show me thy face, for it is glorious." Another, to prove that they ought to be placed on the altars, cited this testimony: "No man lighteth a candle, and putteth it under a bushel." Another, to show the contemplation of these to be useful to us, adduced a verse from a Psalm: "The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is sealed upon us." Another pressed this comparison into his service: "As the patriarchs used the sacrifices of the heathen, so Christians ought to have the images of saints, instead of the idols of the heathen." In the same manner they tortured that expression, "Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house." But the most ingenious

of all was their interpretation of this passage: "As we have heard, so have we seen;" that therefore God is known, not only by the hearing of his word, but by the contemplation of images. Similar is the subtlety of Bishop Theodore: "God is glorious in his saints." And in another place it is said, "In the saints that are in the earth:" therefore this ought to be referred to images. But their impertinencies and absurdities are so disgusting, that I am quite ashamed to repeat them.

XV. When they dispute concerning adoration, they bring forward Jacob's worshipping of Pharaoh, and of the staff of Joseph, and of the inscription erected by himself; although, in this last instance, they not only corrupt the sense of the Scripture, but allege what is nowhere to be found. These passages also, "Worship his footstool;" "Worship in his holy hill;" and, "All the rich of the people shall supplicate thy face;" they consider as apposite and conclusive proofs. If any one wished to represent the advocates for images in a ridiculous point of view, could he possibly ascribe to them greater and grosser instances of folly? But, that no doubt of this might remain, Theodosius, bishop of Mira, defends the propriety of worshipping images from the dreams of his arch-deacon, as seriously as if he had an immediate revelation from heaven. Now, let the advocates of images go and urge upon us the decree of that Council; as though those venerable fathers had not entirely destroyed all their credit by such puerile treatment of the sacred Scriptures, or such impious and shameful mutilation of them.

XVI. I come now to those prodigies of impiety, which it is wonderful that they ever ventured to broach; and more wonderful still, that they have not been opposed with universal detestation. It is right to expose this flagitious madness, that the worship of images may at least be deprived of the pretence of antiquity, which the papists falsely urge in its favour. Theodosius, bishop of Amorum, denounces an anathema against all who are averse to the worship of images. Another imputes all the calamities of Greece and the East to the crime of not having worshipped them. What punishments, then, did the Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs deserve, in whose time images were unknown? They add further, If the image of the emperor be met by processions with perfumes and incense, much more is this honour due to the images of the saints. Constantius, bishop of Constance, in Cyprus, professes his reverence for images, and avows that he will pay them the same worship and honour as is due to the Trinity, the source of all life; and whoever refuses to do the same, he anathematizes and dismisses with the Manichees and Marcionites. And, lest you should suppose this to be the private opinion of an

individual, they all declare their assent to it. John, the delegate of the Eastern churches, carried by the fervour of his zeal to still greater lengths, asserts it to be better to admit all the brothels of the world into one city, than to reject the worship of images. At length it was unanimously decreed, that the Samaritans were worse than all heretics, and that the adversaries of images were worse than the Samaritans. But, that the farce might not want its usual plaudit, they add this clause: "Let them rejoice and exult, who have the image of Christ, and offer sacrifice to it." Where is now the distinction of *latría* and *dulia*, with which they attempt to deceive both God and men? For the Council gives the same honour, without any exception, to images and to the living God.

CHAPTER XII.

GOD CONTRADISTINGUISHED FROM IDOLS, THAT HE MAY BE SOLELY AND SUPREMELY WORSHIPPED.

WE said, at the beginning, that the knowledge of God consists not in frigid speculation, but is accompanied by the worship of him. We also cursorily touched on the right method of worshipping him, which will be more fully explained in other places. I now only repeat, in few words, that whenever the Scripture asserts that there is but one God, it contends not for the bare name, but also teaches, that whatever belongs to the Deity, should not be transferred to another. This shows how pure religion differs from idolatry. The Greek word *εὐσεβεία* certainly signifies right worship, since even blind mortals, groping in the dark, have always perceived the necessity of some certain rule, that the worship of God may not be involved in disorder and confusion. Although Cicero ingeniously and correctly derives the word *religion* from a verb signifying "to read over again," or "to gather again;" yet the reason he assigns for it, that good worshippers often recollect, and diligently reconsider what is true, is forced and far-fetched. I rather think the word is opposed to a liberty of wandering without restraint; because the greater part of the world rashly embrace whatever they meet with, and also ramble from one thing to another; but piety, in order to walk with a steady step, collects itself within its proper limits. The word *superstition* also appears to me to import a discontent with the method and order prescribed, and an accumulation of a super-

fluous mass of vain things. But to leave the consideration of words, it has been generally admitted, in all ages, that religion is corrupted and perverted by errors and falsehoods; whence we infer, that when we allow ourselves any thing from inconsiderate zeal, the pretext alleged by the superstitious is altogether frivolous. Although this confession is in the mouths of all, they betray, at the same time, a shameful ignorance, neither adhering to the one true God, nor observing any discrimination in his worship, as we have before shown. But God, to assert his own right, proclaims that he is "jealous," and will be a severe avenger, if men confound him with any fictitious deity; and then, to retain mankind in obedience, he defines his legitimate worship. He comprises both in his law, where he first binds the faithful to himself, as their sole legislator; and then prescribes a rule for the right worship of him according to his will. Now, of the law, since the uses and ends of it are various, I shall treat in its proper place: at present, I only remark, that it sets up a barrier to prevent men turning aside to corrupt modes of worship. Let us remember, what I have already stated, that, unless every thing belonging to Divinity remain in God alone, he is spoiled of his honour, and his worship is violated. And here it is necessary to animadvert more particularly on the subtle fallacies of superstition. For it revolts not to strange gods, in such a manner as to appear to desert the supreme God, or to degrade him to a level with others; but, allowing him the highest place, it surrounds him with a multitude of inferior deities, among whom it distributes his honours; and thus, in a cunning and hypocritical manner, the glory of Divinity is divided among many, instead of remaining wholly in one. Thus the ancient idolaters, Jews as well as Gentiles, imagined one God, the Father and Governor of all, and subordinate to him a vast multitude of other deities; to whom, in common with the supreme God, they attributed the government of heaven and earth. Thus the saints, who departed out of this life some ages ago, are exalted to the society of God, to be worshipped, and invoked, and celebrated like him. We suppose, indeed, the glory of God not to be sullied with this abomination; whereas it is, in a great measure, suppressed and extinguished, except that we retain some faint notion of his supreme power; but, at the same time, deceived with such impostures, we are seduced to the worship of various deities.

II. On this account was invented the distinction of *latria* and *dulia*, as they express themselves, by which they conceived they might safely ascribe divine honours to angels and deceased men. For it is evident, that the worship which pagans pay to the saints, differs not in reality from the worship

of God; for they adore God and them promiscuously; but when they are accused of it, they evade the charge with this subterfuge, that they preserve inviolate to God what belongs to him, because they leave him *λατρεία*. But since the question relates to a thing, not to a word, who can bear their careless trifling on the most important of all subjects? But, to pass this also, they will gain nothing at last by their distinction, but that they render worship to God alone, and service to the saints. For *λατρεία*, in Greek, signifies the same as *cultus* in Latin, [and *worship* in English;] but *δουλεία* properly signifies *servitus*, [service;] and yet, in the Scriptures, this distinction is sometimes disregarded. But, suppose it to be a constant distinction, it remains to be inquired, what is the meaning of each term. *Λατρεία* is *worship*; *δουλεία* is *service*. Now, no one doubts, that to serve is more than to worship or honour. For it would be irksome to serve many persons, whom you would not refuse to honour. So unjust is the distribution, to assign the greater to the saints, and leave to God that which is less. But many of the ancients, it is urged, have used this distinction. What is that to the purpose, if every one perceives it to be not only improper, but altogether frivolous?

III. Leaving these subtleties, let us consider the subject itself. Paul, when he reminds the Galatians what they had been before they were illuminated in the knowledge of God, says, that they "did service to them which by nature were no gods." (*f*) Though he mentions not *λατρεία*, (worship,) is their idolatry therefore excusable? He certainly condemns that perverse superstition, which he denominates *δουλεία*, (service,) equally as much as if he had used the word *λατρεία*, (worship.) And when Christ repels the assault of Satan with this shield, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," (*g*) the word *λατρεία* came not into the question; for Satan required nothing but *προσκύνησις*, (prostration, or adoration.) So, when John is reprehended by an angel, for having fallen on his knees before him, (*h*) we must not understand that John was so stupid as to intend to transfer to an angel the honour due exclusively to God. But since all worship, that is connected with religion, cannot but savour of Divine, he could not (*προσκυνεῖν*) prostrate himself before the angel, without detracting from the glory of God. We read, indeed, frequently, of men having been worshipped; but that was civil honour, so to speak; religion has a different design; and no sooner is religion connected with worship, or homage, than it produces a profanation of the Divine honour. We may see the same in Cornelius, who had not made such a small progress in piety, as not to ascribe supreme worship to God alone. When

(*f*) Gal. iv. 8. (*g*) Matt. iv. 10. (*h*) Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8, 9.

he "fell down" before Peter, therefore, it certainly was not with an intention of worshipping him instead of God: (i) yet Peter positively forbade him to do it. And why was this, but because men never so particularly distinguish between the worship or homage of God, and that of the creatures, as to avoid transferring to a creature what belongs exclusively to God? Wherefore, if we desire to have but one God, let us remember, that his glory ought not, in the least, to be diminished; but that he must retain all that belongs to him. Therefore Zechariah, when speaking of the restoration of the Church, expressly declares, not only that "there shall be one Lord," but also "that his name shall be one;" (k) signifying, without doubt, that he will have nothing in common with idols. Now, what kind of worship God requires, will be seen, in due course, in another place. For he hath been pleased, in his law, to prescribe to mankind what is lawful and right; and so to confine them to a certain rule, that every individual might not take the liberty of inventing a mode of worship according to his own fancy. But, since it is not proper to burden the reader, by confounding many subjects together, I shall not enter on that point yet; let it suffice to know, that no religious services can be transferred to any other than God alone, without committing sacrilege. At first, indeed, superstition ascribed Divine honours either to the sun, or to the other stars, or to idols. Afterwards followed ambition, which, adorning men with the spoils of God, dared to profane every thing that was sacred. And although there remained a persuasion, that they ought to worship a supreme God, yet it became customary to offer sacrifices promiscuously to genii, and inferior deities, and deceased heroes. So steep is the descent to this vice, to communicate to a vast multitude that which God particularly challenges to himself alone!

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE DIVINE ESSENCE, CONTAINING THREE PERSONS, TAUGHT IN
THE SCRIPTURES FROM THE BEGINNING.

WHAT is taught in the Scriptures concerning the immensity and spirituality of the essence of God, should serve not only to overthrow the foolish notions of the vulgar, but also to refute the subtleties of profane philosophy. One of the ancients, (l)

(i) Acts x. 25.

(k) Zech. xiv. 9.

(l) Seneca, *Præf. lib. 1. Quæst. Nat.*

in his own conception very shrewdly, said, that whatever we see, and whatever we do not see, is God. But he imagined that the Deity was diffused through every part of the world. But, although God, to keep us within the bounds of sobriety, speaks but rarely of his essence, yet, by those two attributes, which I have mentioned, he supersedes all gross imaginations, and represses the presumption of the human mind. For, surely, his immensity ought to inspire us with awe, that we may not attempt to measure him with our senses; and the spirituality of his nature prohibits us from entertaining any earthly or carnal speculations concerning him. For the same reason, he represents his residence to be "in heaven;" for though, as he is incomprehensible, he fills the earth also; yet, seeing that our minds, from their dulness, are continually dwelling on the earth, in order to shake off our sloth and inactivity, he properly raises us above the world. And here is demolished the error of the Manichees, who, by maintaining the existence of two original principles, made the devil, as it were, equal to God. This certainly was both dividing the unity of God, and limiting his immensity. For their daring to abuse certain testimonies of Scripture betrayed a shameful ignorance; as the error itself evidenced an execrable madness. The Anthropomorphites also, who imagined God to be corporeal, because the Scripture frequently ascribes to him a mouth, ears, eyes, hands, and feet, are easily refuted. For who, even of the meanest capacity, understands not, that God lisps, as it were, with us, just as nurses are accustomed to speak to infants? Wherefore, such forms of expression do not clearly explain the nature of God, but accommodate the knowledge of him to our narrow capacity; to accomplish which, the Scripture must necessarily descend far below the height of his majesty.

II. But he also designates himself by another peculiar character, by which he may be yet more clearly distinguished; for, while he declares himself to be but One, he proposes himself to be distinctly considered in Three Persons, without apprehending which, we have only a bare and empty name of God floating in our brains, without any idea of the true God. Now, that no one may vainly dream of three gods, or suppose that the simple essence of God is divided among the three Persons, we must seek for a short and easy definition, which will preserve us from all error. But since some violently object to the word Person, as of human invention, we must first examine the reasonableness of this objection. When the Apostle denominates the Son the express image of the hypostasis of the Father, he undoubtedly ascribes to the Father some subsistence, in which he differs from the Son. For to understand this word as synonymous with Essence, (as some interpreters have done, as

though Christ, like wax impressed with a seal, represented in himself the substance of the Father,) were not only harsh, but also absurd. For the essence of God being simple and indivisible, he who contains all in himself, not in part, or by derivation, but in complete perfection, could not, without impropriety, and even absurdity, be called the express image of it. But since the Father, although distinguished by his own peculiar property, hath expressed himself entirely in his Son, it is with the greatest reason asserted that he hath made his hypostasis conspicuous in him; with which the other appellation, given him in the same passage, of "the brightness of his glory," exactly corresponds. From the words of the Apostle, we certainly conclude, that there is in the Father a proper hypostasis, which is conspicuous in the Son. And thence also we easily infer the hypostasis of the Son, which distinguishes him from the Father. The same reasoning is applicable to the Holy Spirit; for we shall soon prove him also to be God; and yet he must, of necessity, be considered as distinct from the Father. But this is not a distinction of the essence, which it is unlawful to represent as any other than simple and undivided. It follows, therefore, if the testimony of the Apostle be credited, that there are in God three *hypostases*. And, as the Latins have expressed the same thing by the word *person*, it is too fastidious and obstinate to contend about so clear a matter. If we wish to translate word for word, we may call it *subsistence*. Many, in the same sense, have called it *substance*. Nor has the word *person* been used by the Latins only; but the Greeks also, for the sake of testifying their consent to this doctrine, taught the existence of three *πρόσωπα* (persons) in God. But both Greeks and Latins, notwithstanding any verbal difference, are in perfect harmony respecting the doctrine itself.

III. Now, though heretics rail at the word *person*, or some morose and obstinate men clamorously refuse to admit a name of human invention; since they cannot make us assert that there are three, each of whom is entirely God, nor yet that there are more gods than one, how very unreasonable is it to reprobate words which express nothing but what is testified and recorded in the Scriptures! It were better, say they, to restrain not only our thoughts, but our expressions also, within the limits of the Scripture, than to introduce exotic words, which may generate future dissensions and disputes; for thus we weary ourselves with verbal controversies; thus the truth is lost in alteration; thus charity expires in odious contention. If they call every word exotic, which cannot be found in the Scriptures in so many syllables, they impose on us a law which is very unreasonable, and which condemns all interpretation, but what is composed of detached texts of Scripture connected

together. But if by exotic they mean that which is curiously contrived, and superstitiously defended, which tends to contention more than to edification, the use of which is either unseasonable or unprofitable, which offends pious ears with its harshness, and seduces persons from the simplicity of the Divine word, I most cordially embrace their modest opinion. For I think that we ought to speak of God with the same religious caution, which should govern our thoughts of him ; since all the thoughts that we entertain concerning him merely from ourselves, are foolish, and all our expressions absurd. But there is a proper medium to be observed : we should seek in the Scriptures a certain rule, both for thinking and for speaking ; by which we may regulate all the thoughts of our minds, and all the words of our mouths. But what forbids our expressing, in plainer words, those things which, in the Scriptures, are, to our understanding, intricate and obscure, provided our expressions religiously and faithfully convey the true sense of the Scripture, and are used with modest caution, and not without sufficient occasion ? Of this, examples sufficiently numerous are not wanting. But, when it shall have been proved, that the Church was absolutely necessitated to use the terms Trinity and Persons, if any one then censures the novelty of the words, may he not be justly considered as offended at the light of the truth ? as having no other cause of censure, but that the truth is explained and elucidated ?

IV. But such verbal novelty (if it must have this appellation) is principally used, when the truth is to be asserted in opposition to malicious cavillers, who elude it by crafty evasions ; of which we have too much experience in the present day, who find great difficulty in refuting the enemies of pure and sound doctrine : possessed of serpentine lubricity, they escape by the most artful expedients, unless they are vigorously pursued, and held fast when once caught. Thus the ancients, pestered with various controversies against erroneous dogmas, were constrained to express their sentiments with the utmost perspicuity, that they might leave no subterfuges to the impious, who availed themselves of obscure expressions, for the concealment of their errors. Unable to resist the clear testimonies of the Scriptures, Arius confessed Christ to be God, and the Son of God ; and, as though this were all that was necessary, he pretended to agree with the Church at large. But, at the same time, he continued to maintain that Christ was created, and had a beginning like other creatures. To draw the versatile subtlety of this man from its concealment, the ancient Fathers proceeded further, and declared Christ to be the eternal Son of the Father, and consubstantial with the Father. Here impiety openly discovered itself, when the Arians

began inveterately to hate and execrate the name *ὁμοούσιος*, (consubstantial.) But if, in the first instance, they had sincerely and cordially confessed Christ to be God, they would not have denied him to be consubstantial with the Father. Who can dare to censure those good men, as quarrelsome and contentious, for having kindled such a flame of controversy, and disturbed the peace of the Church on account of one little word? That little word distinguished Christians, who held the pure faith, from sacrilegious Arians. Afterwards arose Sabellius, who considered the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as little more than empty sounds; arguing, that they were not used on account of any real distinction, but were different attributes of God, whose attributes of this kind are numerous. If the point came to be controverted, he confessed, that he believed the Father to be God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God; but he would readily evade all the force of this confession, by adding, that he had said no other than if he had called God potent, and just, and wise. And thus he came to another conclusion, that the Father is the Son, and that the Holy Spirit is the Father, without any order or distinction. The good doctors of that age, who had the interest of religion at heart, in order to counteract the wickedness of this man, maintained, on the contrary, that they ought really to acknowledge three peculiar properties in one God. And, to defend themselves against his intricate subtleties, by the plain and simple truth, they affirmed, that they truly subsisted in the one God; or, what is the same, that in the unity of God there subsisted a trinity of Persons.

V. If, then, the words have not been rashly invented, we should beware lest we be convicted of fastidious temerity in rejecting them. I could wish them, indeed, to be buried in oblivion, provided this faith were universally received, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the one God; and that nevertheless the Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit the Son, but that they are distinguished from each other by some peculiar property. I am not so rigidly precise as to be fond of contending for mere words. For I observe that the ancients, who otherwise speak on these subjects with great piety, are not consistent with each other, nor, in all cases, with themselves. For what forms of expression, adopted by councils, does Hilary excuse! To what extremes does Augustine sometimes proceed! How different are the Greeks from the Latins! But of this variation, let one example suffice: when the Latins would translate the word *ὁμοούσιος*, they called it *consubstantial*, signifying the *substance* of the Father and the Son to be one, and thus using *substance* for *essence*. Whence also Jerome, writing to Damasus, pronounces it to be sacrilege

to say that there are three *substances* in God. Yet, that there are three *substances* in God, you will find asserted in Hilary more than a hundred times. But how perplexed is Jerome on the word *hypostasis* ! For he suspects some latent poison in the assertion, that there are three *hypostases* in God. And if any one uses this word in a pious sense, he refrains not from calling it an improper expression ; if, indeed, he was sincere in this declaration, and did not rather knowingly and wilfully endeavour to asperse, with a groundless calumny, the bishops of the East, whom he hated. He certainly discovers not much ingenuousness in affirming that, in all the profane schools, *ousia* (essence) is the same as *hypothesis*, (hypostasis,) which the trite and common use of the words universally contradicts. More modesty and liberality are discovered by Augustine, who, though he asserts that the word *hypostasis*, in this sense, is new to Latin ears, yet leaves the Greeks their usual phraseology, and even peaceably tolerates the Latins, who had imitated their language ; and the account of Socrates, in the sixth book of his Tripartite History, seems to imply, that it was by ignorant men that it had first been improperly applied to this subject. The same Hilary accuses the heretics of a great crime, in constraining him, by their wickedness, to expose to the danger of human language those things which ought to be confined within the religion of the mind ; plainly avowing that this is to do things unlawful, to express things inexpressible, to assume things not conceded. A little after, he largely excuses himself for his boldness in bringing forward new terms ; for, when he has used the names of nature, Father, Son, and Spirit, he immediately adds, that whatever is sought further, is beyond the signification of language, beyond the reach of our senses, beyond the conception of our understanding. And, in another place, he pronounces that happy were the bishops of Gaul, who had neither composed, nor received, nor even known, any other confession but that ancient and very simple one, which had been received in all the churches from the days of the Apostles. Very similar is the excuse of Augustine, that this word was extorted by necessity, on account of the poverty of human language on so great a subject, not for the sake of expressing what God is, but to avoid passing it over in total silence, that the Father, Son, and Spirit are three. This moderation of those holy men should teach us, not to pass such severe censures on those who are unwilling to subscribe to expressions adopted by us, provided they are not actuated by pride, perverseness, or disingenuous subtlety. But let them also, on the other hand, consider the great necessity which constrains us to use such language, that, by degrees, they may at length be accustomed to a useful phraseology.

Let them also learn to beware, since we have to oppose the Arians on one side, and the Sabellians on the other, lest, while they take offence at both these parties being deprived of all opportunity of evasion, they cause some suspicion that they are themselves the disciples either of Arius or of Sabellius. Arius confesses, "that Christ is God;" but maintains also, "that he was created, and had a beginning." He acknowledges that Christ is "one with the Father;" but secretly whispers in the ears of his disciples, that he is "united to him," like the rest of the faithful, though by a singular privilege. Say that he is *consubstantial*, you tear off the mask from the hypocrite, and yet you add nothing to the Scriptures. Sabellius asserts, "that the names Father, Son, and Spirit, are expressive of no distinction in the Godhead." Say that they are three, and he will exclaim, that you are talking of "three gods." Say, "that in the one essence of God there is a trinity of Persons," and you will at once express what the Scriptures declare, and will restrain such frivolous loquacity. Now, if any persons are prevented, by such excessive scrupulousness, from admitting these terms, yet not one of them can deny, that, when the Scripture speaks of one God, it should be understood of a unity of substance; and that, when it speaks of three in one essence, it denotes the Persons in this trinity. When this is honestly confessed, we have no further concern about words. But I have found, by long and frequent experience, that those who pertinaciously contend about words, cherish some latent poison; so that it were better designedly to provoke their resentment, than to use obscure language for the sake of obtaining their favour.

VI. But, leaving the dispute about terms, I shall now enter on the discussion of the subject itself. What I denominate a Person, is a subsistence in the Divine essence, which is related to the others, and yet distinguished from them by an incommunicable property. By the word *subsistence* we mean something different from the word *essence*. For, if the *Word* were simply God, and had no peculiar property, John had been guilty of impropriety in saying that he was always *with God*. (1) When he immediately adds, that *the Word* also *was God*, he reminds us of the unity of the essence. But because he could not be *with God*, without subsisting in the Father, hence arises that subsistence, which, although inseparably connected with the essence, has a peculiar mark, by which it is distinguished from it. Now, I say that each of the three subsistences has a relation to the others, but is distinguished from them by a peculiar property. We particularly use the word

(1) John i. 1.

relation, (or *comparison*,) here, because, when mention is made simply and indefinitely of God, this name pertains no less to the Son and Spirit, than to the Father. But whenever the Father is compared with the Son, the property peculiar to each distinguishes him from the other. Thirdly, whatever is proper to each of them, I assert to be incommunicable, because whatever is ascribed to the Father as a character of distinction, cannot be applied or transferred to the Son. Nor, indeed, do I disapprove of the definition of Tertullian, if rightly understood: "That there is in God a certain distribution or economy, which makes no change in the unity of the essence."

VII. But before I proceed any further, I must prove the Deity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; after which we shall see how they differ from each other. When the Scripture speaks of *the Word of God*, it certainly were very absurd to imagine it to be only a transient and momentary sound, emitted into the air, and coming forth from God himself; of which nature were the oracles, given to the fathers, and all the prophecies. It is rather to be understood of the eternal wisdom residing in God, whence the oracles, and all the prophecies, proceeded. For, according to the testimony of Peter, (*m*) the ancient Prophets spake by the Spirit of Christ no less than the Apostles and all the succeeding ministers of the heavenly doctrine. But, as Christ had not yet been manifested, we must necessarily understand that the Word was begotten of the Father before the world began. And if the Spirit that inspired the Prophets was the Spirit of the Word, we conclude, beyond all doubt, that the Word was truly God. And this is taught by Moses, with sufficient perspicuity, in the creation of the world, in which he represents the Word as acting such a conspicuous part. For why does he relate that God, in the creation of each of his works, said, Let this or that be done, but that the unsearchable glory of God may resplendently appear in his image? Captious and loquacious men would readily evade this argument, by saying, that the *Word* imports an order or command; but the Apostles are better interpreters, who declare, that the worlds were created by the Son, and that he "upholds all things by the word of his power." (*n*) For here we see that the *Word* intends the nod or mandate of the Son, who is himself the eternal and essential Son of the Father. Nor, to the wise and sober, is there any obscurity in that passage of Solomon, where he introduces Wisdom as begotten of the Father before time began, and presiding at the creation of the world, and over all the works of God. For, to pretend that this denotes some temporary ex-

(*m*) 1 Pet. i. 11.

(*n*) Heb. i. 2, 3.

pression of the will of God, were foolish and frivolous ; whereas God then intended to discover his fixed and eternal counsel, and even something more secret. To the same purpose also is that assertion of Christ, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (o) For, by affirming that, from the beginning of the world, he had continually coöperated with the Father, he makes a more explicit declaration of what had been briefly glanced at by Moses. We conclude, therefore, that God spake thus at the creation, that the Word might have his part in the work, and so that operation be common to both. But John speaks more clearly than all others, when he represents *the Word*, who from the beginning *was God with God*, as in union with the Father, the original cause of all things. For to the Word he both attributes a real and permanent essence, and assigns some peculiar property ; and plainly shows how God, by speaking, created the world. Therefore, as all Divine revelations are justly entitled *the word of God*, so we ought chiefly to esteem that substantial Word the source of all revelations, who is liable to no variation, who remains with God perpetually one and the same, and who is God himself.

VIII. Here we are interrupted by some clamorous objectors, who, since they cannot openly rob him of his divinity, secretly steal from him his eternity. For they say, that the Word only began to exist, when God opened his sacred mouth in the creation of the world. But they are too inconsiderate in imagining something new in the substance of God. For, as those names of God, which relate to his external works, began to be ascribed to him after the existence of those works, as when he is called the Creator of heaven and earth, so piety neither acknowledges nor admits any name, signifying that God has found any thing new to happen to himself. For, could any thing, from any quarter, effect a change in him, it would contradict the assertion of James, that " every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning." (p) Nothing, then, is more intolerable, than to suppose a beginning of that Word, which was always God, and afterwards the Creator of the world. But they argue, in their own apprehension most acutely, that Moses, by representing God as having then spoken for the first time, implies also, that there was no Word in him before ; than which nothing is more absurd. For it is not to be concluded, because any thing begins to be manifested at a certain time, that it had no prior existence. I form a very different conclusion ; that, since, in the very instant when God said, " Let there be light," (q) the power of the Word

(o) John v. 17.

(p) James i. 17.

(q) Gen. i. 3.

was clearly manifested, the Word must have existed long before. But if any one inquires, how long, he will find no beginning. For he limits no certain period of time, when he himself says, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (r) Nor is this omitted by John; for, before he descends to the creation of the world, he declares that the Word "was in the beginning with God." (s) We therefore conclude again, that the Word, conceived of God before time began, perpetually remained with him, which proves his eternity, his true essence, and his divinity.

IX. Though I advert not yet to the person of the Mediator, but defer it to that part of the work which will relate to redemption, yet, since it ought, without controversy, to be believed by all, that Christ is the very same Word clothed in flesh, any testimonies which assert the Deity of Christ, will be very properly introduced here. When it is said, in the forty-fifth Psalm, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," the Jews endeavour to evade its force, by pleading that the name *Elohim* is applicable also to angels, and to men of dignity and power. But there cannot be found in the Scripture a similar passage, which erects an eternal throne for a creature; for he is not merely called God, but is also declared to possess an eternal dominion. Besides, this title is never given to a creature, without some addition, as when it is said that Moses should be "a god to Pharaoh." (t) Some read it in the genitive case, "Thy throne is of God," which is extremely insipid. I confess, indeed, that what is eminently and singularly excellent, is frequently called Divine; but it sufficiently appears from the context, that such a meaning would be uncouth and forced, and totally inapplicable here. But, if their perverseness refuse to yield this point, there certainly is no obscurity in Isaiah, where he introduces Christ as God, and as crowned with supreme power, which is the prerogative of God alone. "His name," says he, "shall be called the Mighty God, the Father of eternity," &c. (v) Here also the Jews object, and invert the reading of the passage in this manner: "This is the name by which the mighty God, the Father of eternity, shall call him," &c.; so that they would leave the Son only the title of Prince of peace. But to what purpose would so many epithets be accumulated in this passage on God the Father, when the design of the prophet is to distinguish Christ by such eminent characters as may establish our faith in him? Wherefore, there can be no doubt that he is there denominated the Mighty God, just as, a little before, he is called Immanuel. But nothing can be required plainer than a passage in Jeremiah, that this should be the name

(r) John xvii. 5.

(s) John i. 2.

(t) Exod. vii. 1.

(v) Isaiah ix. 6.

whereby the Branch of David shall be called "Jehovah our righteousness." (*w*) For since the Jews themselves teach, that all other names of God are mere epithets, but that this alone, which they call ineffable, is a proper name expressive of his Essence, we conclude, that the Son is the one eternal God, who declares, in another place, that he "will not give his glory to another." (*x*) This also they endeavour to evade, because Moses imposed this name on an altar which he built, and Ezekiel on the city of the new Jerusalem. But who does not perceive, that the altar was erected as a monument of Moses having been exalted by God, and that Jerusalem is honoured with the name of God, only as a testimony of the Divine presence? For thus speaks the prophet: "The name of the city shall be, Jehovah is there." (*y*) But Moses expresses himself thus: He "built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi," (my exaltation.) (*z*) But there is more contention about another passage of Jeremiah, where the same title is given to Jerusalem in these words: "This is the name wherewith she shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness." (*a*) But this testimony is so far from opposing the truth which we are defending, that it rather confirms it. For, having before testified that Christ is the true Jehovah, from whom righteousness proceeds, he now pronounces that the church will have such a clear apprehension of it, as to be able to glory in the same name. In the former place, then, is shown the original cause of righteousness, in the latter the effect.

X. Now, if these things do not satisfy the Jews, I see not by what cavils they can evade the accounts of Jehovah having so frequently appeared in the character of an angel. An angel is said to have appeared to the holy fathers. He claims for himself the name of the eternal God. If it be objected, that this is spoken with regard to the character which he sustains, this by no means removes the difficulty. For a servant would never rob God of his honour, by permitting sacrifice to be offered to himself. But the angel, refusing to eat bread, commands a sacrifice to be offered to Jehovah. He afterwards demonstrates that he is really Jehovah himself. Therefore Manoah and his wife conclude, from this evidence, that they have seen, not a mere angel, but God himself. Hence he says, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." When his wife replies, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received" a sacrifice "at our hands," (*b*) she clearly acknowledges him to be God, who before is called an angel. Moreover, the reply of the angel himself removes every doubt: "Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful?" So much the more detes-

(*w*) Jer. xxiii. 6.(*z*) Isaiah xlii. 8.(*y*) Ezek. xlviii. 35.(*a*) Jer. xxxiii. 16.(*b*) Judges xiii. 22, 23.

press command of God. David indeed praises the general providence of God, because "he giveth food to the young ravens which cry;" (c) but when God himself threatens animals with famine, does he not plainly declare, that he feeds all living creatures, sometimes with a smaller allowance, sometimes with a larger, as he pleases? It is puerile, as I have already observed, to restrain this to particular acts; whereas Christ says, without any exception, that not a sparrow of the least value falls to the ground without the will of the Father. (d) Certainly, if the flight of birds be directed by the unerring counsel of God, we must be constrained to confess with the Prophet, that, though "he dwelleth on high," yet "he humbleth himself to behold the things which are in heaven and in the earth." (e)

VI. But as we know that the world was made chiefly for the sake of mankind, we must also observe this end in the government of it. The Prophet Jeremiah exclaims, "I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (f) And Solomon: "Man's goings are of the Lord: how can a man then understand his own way?" (g) Now, let them say that man is actuated by God according to the bias of his nature, but that he directs that influence according to his own pleasure. If this could be asserted with truth, man would have the free choice of his own ways. That, perhaps, they will deny, because he can do nothing independently of the power of God. But since it is evident that both the Prophet and Solomon ascribe to God choice and appointment, as well as power, this by no means extricates them from the difficulty. But Solomon, in another place, beautifully reproves this temerity of men, who predetermine on an end for themselves, without regard to God, as though they were not led by his hand: "The preparation of the heart in man," says he, "and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." (h) It is, indeed, a ridiculous madness for miserable men to resolve on undertaking any work independently of God, whilst they cannot even speak a word but what he chooses. Moreover, the Scripture, more fully to express that nothing is transacted in the world but according to his destination, shows that those things are subject to him which appear most fortuitous. For what would you be more ready to attribute to chance, than when a limb broken off from a tree kills a passing traveller? But very different is the decision of the Lord, who acknowledges that he has delivered him into the hand of the slayer. (i) Who, likewise, does not leave lots to the blindness of fortune? Yet the Lord leaves

(c) Psalm cxlvii. 9
(d) Matt. x. 29.

(e) Psalm cxliii. 5, 6.
(f) Jer. x. 23.

(g) Prov. xx. 24.
(h) Prov. xvi. 1.

(i) Exod. xxi. 13.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOD USES THE AGENCY OF THE IMPIOUS, AND INCLINES THEIR MINDS TO EXECUTE HIS JUDGMENTS, YET WITHOUT THE LEAST STAIN OF HIS PERFECT PURITY.

A QUESTION of greater difficulty arises from other passages, where God is said to incline or draw, according to his own pleasure, Satan himself and all the reprobate. For the carnal understanding scarcely comprehends how he, acting by their means, contracts no defilement from their criminality, and, even in operations common to himself and them, is free from every fault, and yet righteously condemns those whose ministry he uses. Hence was invented the distinction between *doing* and *permitting*; because to many persons this has appeared an inexplicable difficulty, that Satan and all the impious are subject to the power and government of God, so that he directs their malice to whatever end he pleases, and uses their crimes for the execution of his judgments. The modesty of those who are alarmed at the appearance of absurdity, might perhaps be excusable, if they did not attempt to vindicate the Divine justice from all accusation by a pretence utterly destitute of any foundation in truth. They consider it absurd that a man should be blinded by the will and command of God, and afterwards be punished for his blindness. They therefore evade the difficulty, by alleging that it happens only by the permission, and not by the will of God; but God himself, by the most unequivocal declarations, rejects this subterfuge. That men, however, can effect nothing but by the secret will of God, and can deliberate on nothing but what he has previously decreed, and determines by his secret direction, is proved by express and innumerable testimonies. What we have before cited from the Psalmist, that "God hath done whatsoever he hath pleased," (y) undoubtedly pertains to all the actions of men. If God be the certain arbiter of war and peace, as is there affirmed, and that without any exception, who will venture to assert, that he remains ignorant and unconcerned respecting men, while they are actuated by the blind influence of chance? But this subject will be better elucidated by particular examples. From the first chapter of Job we know that Satan presents himself before God to receive his commands, as well as the angels, who yield a spontaneous obedience. It is, indeed,

in a different manner, and for a different end; yet he cannot attempt any thing but by the Divine will. Although he seems to obtain only a bare permission to afflict that holy man, yet, since this sentence is true, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," (z) we conclude that God was the author of that trial, of which Satan and mischievous robbers and assassins were the immediate agents. Satan endeavours to drive him by desperation into madness. The Sabeans, in a predatory incursion, cruelly and wickedly seize upon property not their own. Job acknowledges that he was stripped of all his wealth, and reduced to poverty, because such was the will of God. Therefore, whatever is attempted by men, or by Satan himself, God still holds the helm, to direct all their attempts to the execution of his judgments. God intends the deception of that perfidious king Ahab; the devil offers his service for that purpose; he is sent with a positive commission to be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets. (a) If the blinding and infatuation of Ahab be a Divine judgment, the pretence of bare permission disappears. For it would be ridiculous for a judge merely to permit, without decreeing what should be done, and commanding his officers to execute it. The Jews designed to destroy Christ; Pilate and his soldiers complied with their outrageous violence; yet the disciples, in a solemn prayer, confess that all the impious did nothing but what "the hand and the counsel of God determined before to be done;" (b) agreeably to what Peter had already preached, that he was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," that he might be "crucified and slain." (c) As though he had said that God, who saw every thing from the beginning, with a clear knowledge and determined will, appointed what the Jews executed; as he mentions in another place: "Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." (d) Absalom, defiling his father's bed with incest, perpetrated a detestable crime; yet God pronounces that this was his work; for his words are, "Thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." (e) Whatever cruelty the Chaldeans exercised in Judea, Jeremiah pronounces to be the work of God; (f) for which reason Nebuchadnezzar is called the servant of God. God frequently proclaims, that the impious are excited to war by his hissing, by the sound of his trumpet, by his influence, and by his command: he calls the Assyrian the rod of his anger, and the staff which he moves with his hand. The destruction

(z) Job i. 21. (a) 1 Kings xxii. 20—23. (b) Acts iv. 28. (c) Acts ii. 23.
 (d) Acts iii. 18. (e) 2 Sam. xii. 12; xvi. 22. (f) Jer. i. 25.

of the holy city and the ruin of the temple he calls his own work. (*g*) David, not murmuring against God, but acknowledging him to be a righteous Judge, confesses the maledictions of Shimei to proceed from his command. "The Lord," says he, "hath said unto him, Curse." (*h*) It often occurs in the Sacred History, that whatever comes to pass proceeds from the Lord; as the defection of the ten tribes, (*i*) the death of the sons of Eli, (*j*) and many events of a similar kind. Those who are but moderately acquainted with the Scriptures will perceive that, for the sake of brevity, out of a great number of testimonies, I have produced only a few; which, nevertheless, abundantly evince how nugatory and insipid it is, instead of the providence of God, to substitute a bare permission; as though God were sitting in a watchtower, expecting fortuitous events, and so his decisions were dependent on the will of men.

II. With respect to his secret influences, the declaration of Solomon concerning the heart of a king, that it is inclined hither or thither according to the Divine will, (*k*) certainly extends to the whole human race, and is as much as though he had said, that whatever conceptions we form in our minds, they are directed by the secret inspiration of God. And certainly, if he did not operate internally on the human mind, there would be no propriety in asserting, that he causes "the wisdom of the wise to perish, and the understanding of the prudent to be hid; that he poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way." (*l*) And to this alludes, what we frequently read, that men are timorous, as their hearts are possessed with his fear. (*m*) Thus David departed from the camp of Saul, without the knowledge of any one; "because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them all." (*n*) But nothing can be desired more explicit than his frequent declarations, that he blinds the minds of men, strikes them with giddiness, inebriates them with the spirit of slumber, fills them with infatuation, and hardens their hearts. (*o*) These passages also many persons refer to permission, as though, in abandoning the reprobate, God permitted them to be blinded by Satan. But that solution is too frivolous, since the Holy Spirit expressly declares that their blindness and infatuation are inflicted by the righteous judgment of God. He is said to have caused the obduracy of Pharaoh's heart, and also to have aggravated and confirmed it. Some elude the force of these expressions with

(*g*) Isaiah v. 26; x. 5; xix. 25. (*h*) 2 Sam. xvi. 10. (*i*) 1 Kings xi. 31.

(*j*) 1 Sam. ii. 34. (*k*) Prov. xxi. 1.

(*l*) Isaiah xxix. 14. Psalm cvii. 40. Ezek. vii. 26. (*m*) Lev. xxvi. 36.

(*n*) 1 Sam. xxvi. 12. (*o*) Rom. i. 28; xi. 8. Exod. viii. 15.

a foolish cavil — that, since Pharaoh himself is elsewhere said to have hardened his own heart, his own will is stated as the cause of his obduracy ; as though these two things were at all incompatible with each other, that man should be actuated by God, and yet at the same time be active himself. But I retort on them their own objection ; for if *hardening* denotes a bare permission, Pharaoh cannot properly be charged with being the cause of his own obstinacy. Now, how weak and insipid would be such an interpretation, as though Pharaoh only permitted himself to be hardened ! Besides, the Scripture cuts off all occasion for such cavils. God says, “ I will harden his heart.” (*p*) So, also, Moses says, concerning the inhabitants of Canaan, that they marched forth to battle, because the Lord had hardened their hearts ; (*q*) which is likewise repeated by another Prophet — “ He turned their hearts to hate his people.” (*r*) Thus, also, in Isaiah, he declares he will “ send the Assyrian against a hypocritical nation, and will give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey ;” (*s*) not that he meant to teach impious and refractory men a voluntary obedience, but because he would incline them to execute his judgments, just as if they had his commands engraven on their minds. Hence it appears that they were impelled by the positive appointment of God. I grant, indeed, that God often actuates the reprobate by the interposition of Satan ; but in such a manner that Satan himself acts his part by the Divine impulse, and proceeds to the extent of the Divine appointment. Saul was disturbed by an evil spirit ; but it is said to be “ from the Lord ;” (*t*) to teach us that Saul’s madness proceeded from the righteous vengeance of God. Satan is also said to blind “ the minds of them which believe not ;” (*u*) but the strength of the delusion proceeds from God himself, “ that they should believe a lie, who believe not the truth.” (*v*) According to one view of the subject, it is said, “ If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet.” (*w*) But, according to another, God is said himself to “ give men over to a reprobate mind,” (*x*) and to the vilest lusts ; because he is the principal author of his own righteous vengeance, and Satan is only the dispenser of it. But as we must discuss this subject again in the second book, where we shall treat of the freedom or slavery of the human will, I think I have now said, in a brief manner, as much as the occasion required. The whole may be summed up thus ; that, as the will of God is said to be the cause of all things, his providence is established as the governor in all the counsels and works of

(*p*) Exod. iv. 21.(*q*) Deut. ii. 30. Joshua xi. 20.(*r*) Psalm cv. 25.(*s*) Isaiah x. 6.(*t*) 1 Sam. xvi. 14.(*u*) 2 Cor. iv. 4.(*v*) 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.(*w*) Ezek. xiv. 9.(*x*) Rom. i. 28.

men, so that it not only exerts its power in the elect, who are influenced by the Holy Spirit, but also compels the compliance of the reprobate.

III. But, as I have hitherto only recited such things as are delivered without any obscurity or ambiguity in the Scriptures, let persons who hesitate not to brand with ignominy those oracles of heaven, beware what kind of opposition they make. For, if they pretend ignorance, with a desire to be commended for their modesty, what greater instance of pride can be conceived, than to oppose one little word to the authority of God ! as, "It appears otherwise to me," or, "I would rather not meddle with this subject." But if they openly censure, what will they gain by their puny attempts against heaven ? Their petulance, indeed, is no novelty ; for in all ages there have been impious and profane men, who have virulently opposed this doctrine. But they shall feel the truth of what the Spirit long ago declared by the mouth of David, that God "is clear when he judgeth." (y) David obliquely hints at the madness of men who display such excessive presumption amidst their insignificance, as not only to dispute against God, but to arrogate to themselves the power of condemning him. In the mean time, he briefly suggests, that God is unaffected by all the blasphemies which they discharge against heaven, but that he dissipates the mists of calumny, and illustriously displays his righteousness ; our faith, also, being founded on the Divine word, (z) and therefore, superior to all the world, from its exaltation looks down with contempt upon those mists. For their first objection, that, if nothing happens but by the will of God, he has in him two contrary wills, because he decrees in his secret counsel what he has publicly prohibited in his law, is easily refuted. But before I reply, I wish the reader again to be apprized, that this cavil is directed, not against me, but against the Holy Spirit, who dictated to the pious Job this confession, that what had befallen him had happened according to the Divine will : when he had been plundered by banditti, he acknowledged in their injuries the righteous scourge of God. (a) What says the Scripture in another case ? "They," the sons of Eli, "hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them." (b) The Psalmist also exclaims, that "God," who "is in the heavens, hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." (c) And now I have sufficiently proved, that God is called the author of all those things, which, according to the system of these censors, happen only by his uninfluential permission. He declares that he

(y) Psalm li. 4.

(z) 1 John v. 4.

(a) Job i. 21.

(b) 1 Sam. ii. 25.

(c) Psalm cxv. 3.

creates light and darkness, that he forms good and evil, (*d*) and that no evil occurs, which he has not performed. Let them say, then, whether he exercises his judgments voluntarily or involuntarily. But as Moses suggests, that he who is killed by the fortuitous fall of an axe, is delivered by God to the stroke, (*e*) so in the Acts, the whole church asserts that Herod and Pilate conspired to do what the hand and the counsel of God had predetermined. (*f*) And indeed, unless the crucifixion of Christ was according to the will of God, what becomes of our redemption? Yet the will of God is neither repugnant to itself, nor subject to change, nor chargeable with pretending to dislike what it approves; but whilst in him it is uniform and simple, it wears to us the appearance of variety; because the weakness of our understanding comprehends not how the same thing may be in different respects both agreeable to his will, and contrary to it. Paul, after having said that the vocation of the Gentiles was a hidden mystery, adds, that it contained a manifestation of the manifold wisdom of God. (*g*) Now, because, through the dulness of our capacity, the Divine wisdom appears to us manifold, (or multiform, as it has been translated by an ancient interpreter,) shall we therefore dream of any vanity in God himself, as though his counsels were mutable, or his thoughts contradictory to each other? Rather, while we comprehend not how God intends that to be done, the doing of which he forbids, let us remember our imbecility, and at the same time consider, that the light which he inhabits, is justly called inaccessible, (*h*) because it is over-spread with impenetrable darkness. Therefore all pious and modest men will easily acquiesce in this opinion of Augustine: "That a man may sometimes choose, with a good intention, that which is not agreeable to the will of God; as, if a good son wishes his father to live, whilst God determines that he shall die. It is also possible for a man to will with a bad design, what God wills with a good one; as, if a bad son wishes his father to die, which is also the will of God. Now, the former wishes what is not agreeable, the latter what is agreeable to the Divine will. And yet the filial affection of the former is more consonant to the righteous will of God, than the want of natural affection in the latter, though it accords with his secret design. So great is the difference between what belongs to the human will, and what to the Divine, and between the ends to which the will of every one is to be referred, for approbation or censure. For God fulfils his righteous will by the wicked wills of wicked men." This writer had just before said, that the apostate angels, and all

(*d*) Isaiah xlv. 7. Amos iii. 6.(*g*) Ephes. iii. 9, 10.(*e*) Deut. xix. 5.(*h*) 1 Tim. vi. 16.(*f*) Acts iv. 28.

the reprobate, in their defection, acted, as far as respected themselves, in direct opposition to the Divine will; but that this was not possible with respect to the Divine omnipotence; because, while they are opposing the will of God, his will is accomplished concerning them. Whence he exclaims, "The works of the Lord are great, prepared according to all his determinations;" (i) so that, in a wonderful and ineffable manner, that is not done without his will which yet is contrary to his will; because it would not be done if he did not permit it; and this permission is not involuntary, but voluntary; nor would his goodness permit the perpetration of any evil, unless his omnipotence were able even from that evil to educe good."

IV. In the same manner we answer, or rather annihilate, another objection — that, if God not only uses the agency of the impious, but governs their designs and affections, he is the author of all crimes; and therefore men are undeservedly condemned, if they execute what God has decreed, because they obey his will. For his will is improperly confounded with his precept, between which innumerable examples evince the difference to be very great. For although, when Absalom defiled the wives of his father, it was the will of God by this disgrace to punish the adultery of David, (k) he did not therefore command that abandoned son to commit incest, unless perhaps with respect to David, as he speaks of the reproaches of Shimei. (l) For when he confesses Shimei's maledictions to proceed from the Divine command, he by no means commends his obedience, as though that impudent and worthless man were fulfilling a Divine precept; but acknowledging his tongue as the scourge of God, he patiently submits to the chastisement. Let it be remembered, that whilst God by means of the impious fulfils his secret decrees, they are not excusable, as though they were obedient to his precepts, which they wantonly and intentionally violate. The direction of the perverse actions of men, by the secret providence of God, is illustriously exemplified in the election of Jeroboam to the regal dignity. (m) The temerity and infatuation of the people in this proceeding are severely condemned, (n) because they perverted the order established by God, and perfidiously revolted from the family of David; and yet we know that this event was agreeable to the Divine will. Whence there is an appearance of contradiction also in the language of Hosea; for in one place God complains that the erection of that kingdom was without his knowledge and against his will; but in another declares that he gave Jeroboam to be a king in his anger. (o) How can these things be reconciled, that Jeroboam

(i) Psalm cxi. 2.
(k) 2 Sam. xvi. 22.

(l) 2 Sam. xvi. 10.
(m) 1 Kings xii. 20.

(n) Hosea viii. 4.
(o) Hosea xiii. 11.

did not reign by the will of God, and yet that God appointed him to be king? Why, thus: because neither could the people revolt from the family of David, without shaking off the yoke which God had imposed upon them; nor yet was God deprived of the liberty of thus punishing the ingratitude of Solomon. We see, then, how God, while he hates perfidy, yet righteously and with a different design decrees the defection; whence also Jeroboam is, beyond all expectation, constrained by the holy unction to assume the regal office. In the same manner, the Sacred History relates, that God raised up an enemy, to deprive the son of Solomon of part of the kingdom. (*p*) Let the reader diligently consider both these things: because it had pleased God that the people should be under the government of one king, their division into two parts was contrary to his will; and yet from his will the schism first originated. For certainly since a Prophet, both by a prediction and by the ceremony of unction, excited a hope of succeeding to the kingdom, in the mind of Jeroboam, who before entertained not a thought of such an event, this could not be done, either without the knowledge, or against the will, of God, who commanded it to be done; and yet the rebellion of the people is justly condemned, because, in opposition to the Divine will, they revolted from the posterity of David. Thus, also, it is afterwards subjoined, that "the cause" of the haughty contempt of the people manifested by Rehoboam "was of God, that the Lord might perform his word, which he spake by the hand of Ahijah" his servant. (*q*) See how the sacred union is divided, in opposition to the will of God, and yet by his will the ten tribes are alienated from the son of Solomon. Let us add another similar example, where, with the consent, and even by the assistance of the people, the sons of Ahab are massacred, and all his posterity exterminated. (*r*) Jehu, indeed, truly observed that "there had fallen unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord," but that he had "done that which he spake by his servant Elijah." And yet he justly reprehends the citizens of Samaria for having lent their assistance. "Are ye righteous?" says he; "behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him; but who slew all these?" If I am not deceived, I have now clearly explained how the same act displays the criminality of men and the justice of God. And to modest minds this answer of Augustine will always be sufficient: "Since God delivered Christ, and Christ delivered his own body, and Judas delivered the Lord, why, in this delivery, is God righteous and man guilty? Because in the same act, they acted not from

(*p*) 1 Kings xi. 23.(*q*) 1 Kings xii. 15. 2 Chron. x. 15.(*r*) 2 Kings x. 7, 8, 9, 10.

the same cause." But if any persons find greater difficulty in what we now assert, that there is no consent between God and man, in cases where man by his righteous influence commits unlawful actions, let them remember what is advanced by Augustine in another place: "Who can but tremble at those judgments, when God does even in the hearts of the wicked whatsoever he pleases, and yet renders to them according to their demerits?" And certainly it would no more be right to attribute to God the blame of the perfidy of Judas, because he decreed the delivery of his Son, and actually delivered him to death, than to transfer to Judas the praise of redemption. Therefore the same writer elsewhere informs us, that in this scrutiny God inquires, not what men could have done, nor what they have done, but what they intended to do, that he may take cognizance of their design and their will. Let those to whom there appears any harshness in this procedure, consider a little how far their obstinacy is tolerable, while they reject a truth which is attested by plain testimonies of Scripture, because it exceeds their comprehension, and condemn the publication of those things which God, unless he had known that the knowledge of them would be useful, would never have commanded to be taught by his Prophets and Apostles. For our wisdom ought to consist in embracing with gentle docility, and without any exception, all that is delivered in the sacred Scriptures. But those who oppose this doctrine with less modesty and greater violence, since it is evident that their opposition is against God, are unworthy of a longer refutation.

order that they may repent, but rather to teach us that all men are overwhelmed with an inevitable calamity, from which they can never emerge unless they are extricated by the mercy of God. As this could not be proved unless it were evinced by the ruin and destruction of our nature, he has adduced these testimonies, which demonstrate our nature to be totally ruined. Let this, then, be admitted, that men are such as they are here described, not only by corrupt habits, but also by a depravity of nature; for otherwise the reasoning of the Apostle could not be supported, "that there is no salvation for man but from the mercy of God; since in himself he is in a ruined and desperate condition." Here I shall not attempt to establish the application of the testimonies, to preclude the appearance of their being improperly introduced. I shall treat them just as if they had been originally uttered by Paul, and not quoted from the Prophets. He divests man first of righteousness, that is, integrity and purity, and then of understanding. Defect of understanding is proved by apostasy from God, the seeking of whom is the first step in the path of wisdom; but this loss must necessarily befall those who have revolted from God. He adds, that all have gone out of the way, and are become altogether corrupt, that there is not one that does good. Then he subjoins the flagitious crimes, with which they, who are once abandoned to iniquity, contaminate all the members of their bodies. Lastly, he declares them to be destitute of the fear of God, the rule by which all our steps ought to be directed. If these are the hereditary characters of mankind, in vain do we seek in our nature for any thing that is good. I grant, indeed, that all these crimes are not exhibited in every individual; yet it cannot be denied that this monster lurks in the hearts of all. For as the body, which already contains within itself the cause and matter of a disease, although it has yet no sensation of pain, cannot be said to enjoy good health, neither can the soul be esteemed healthy, while it is full of such moral maladies; although this similitude will not correspond in every particular; for in the body, however diseased, there remains the vigour of life; but the soul, immersed in this gulf of iniquity, is not only the subject of vices, but totally destitute of every thing that is good.

III. A question, nearly the same as we have already answered, here presents itself to us again. For in all ages there have been some persons, who, from the mere dictates of nature, have devoted their whole lives to the pursuit of virtue. And though many errors might perhaps be discovered in their conduct, yet by their pursuit of virtue they afforded a proof, that there was some degree of purity in their nature. The value attached to virtues of such a description before God, we shall

more fully discuss when we come to treat of the merits of works; yet it must be stated also in this place, so far as is necessary for the elucidation of the present subject. These examples, then, seem to teach us that we should not consider human nature to be totally corrupted; since, from its instinctive bias, some men have not only been eminent for noble actions, but have uniformly conducted themselves in a most virtuous manner through the whole course of their lives. But here we ought to remember, that amidst this corruption of nature there is some room for Divine grace, not to purify it, but internally to restrain its operations. For should the Lord permit the minds of all men to give up the reins to every lawless passion, there certainly would not be an individual in the world, whose actions would not evince all the crimes, for which Paul condemns human nature in general, to be most truly applicable to him. For can you except yourself from the number of those whose feet are swift to shed blood, whose hands are polluted with rapine and murder, whose throats are like open sepulchres, whose tongues are deceitful, whose lips are envenomed, whose works are useless, iniquitous, corrupt, and deadly, whose souls are estranged from God, the inmost recesses of whose hearts are full of pravity, whose eyes are insidiously employed, whose minds are elated with insolence — in a word, all whose powers are prepared for the commission of atrocious and innumerable crimes? If every soul be subject to all these monstrous vices, as the Apostle fearlessly pronounces, we clearly see what would be the consequence, if the Lord should suffer the human passions to go all the lengths to which they are inclined. There is no furious beast, that would be agitated with such ungovernable rage; there is no river, though ever so rapid and violent, that would overflow its boundaries with such impetuosity. In his elect, the Lord heals these maladies by a method which we shall hereafter describe. In others, he restrains them, only to prevent their ebullitions so far as he sees to be necessary for the preservation of the universe. Hence some by shame, and some by fear of the laws, are prevented from running into many kinds of pollutions, though they cannot in any great degree dissemble their impurity; others, because they think that a virtuous course of life is advantageous, entertain some languid desires after it; others go further, and display more than common excellence, that by their majesty they may confine the vulgar to their duty. Thus God by his providence restrains the perverseness of our nature from breaking out into external acts, but does not purify it within.

IV. But it may be said, the difficulty is not yet removed. For either we must esteem Camillus to be exactly similar to

Catiline, or in Camillus we shall have an example that nature, if it be studiously cultivated, is not altogether destitute of goodness. I grant, indeed, that the virtues displayed in Camillus were gifts of God, and if considered in themselves, appear justly worthy of commendation : but how will they be proofs of any natural goodness in him ? To establish this, must we not recur to the heart, and argue, that if a natural man was eminent for such integrity of manners, human nature is not destitute of ability for the pursuit of virtue ? But what if his heart was depraved and perverted, and followed any thing rather than the path of rectitude ? And that it was such, if you concede that he was a natural man, is beyond all doubt. What ability, then, will you attribute to human nature for the pursuit of virtue, if, with the greatest appearance of integrity, it is discovered to be always tending to corruption ? Therefore, as you will not commend a man for virtue, whose vices have only counterfeited the external form of virtue, so you must not attribute to the human will a power of desiring what is right, as long as it continues fixed in its perverseness. The most certain and easy solution of this question, however, is, that those virtues are not the common properties of nature, but the peculiar graces of God, which he dispenses in great variety, and in a certain degree to men that are otherwise profane. For which reason we hesitate not, in common speech, to call the nature of one man good, and of another depraved. Yet we still include both in the universal state of human depravity ; but we signify what peculiar grace God has conferred on the one, with which he has not deigned to favour the other. When he determined to exalt Saul to the kingdom, he made him, as it were, a new man ; and this is the reason why Plato, alluding to the fable of Homer, says, that the sons of kings are formed with some distinguishing singularity of character ; because God, consulting the benefit of mankind, frequently furnishes with an heroic nature those whom he destines to hold the reins of empire ; and from this source have proceeded all the exploits of great heroes which are celebrated in history. The same judgment must be formed concerning those also who are in a private station. But because every one who has risen to great eminence has been impelled by his ambition, which defiles all virtues, and deprives them of all excellence in the Divine view, whatever may be apparently laudable in ungodly men, ought not to be esteemed at all meritorious. Besides, the chief branch of rectitude is wanting, where there is no concern to display the glory of God : of this principle all are destitute whom he has not regenerated by his Spirit. Nor is it in vain that Isaiah says, that "the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall rest upon " Christ ; (a) which teaches us, that all

who are alienated from Christ are destitute of that "fear of the Lord" which is "the beginning of wisdom." (b) The virtues which deceive us by their vain and specious appearance, will be applauded in civil courts, and in the common estimation of mankind; but before the celestial tribunal they will possess no value to merit the reward of righteousness.

V. The will, therefore, is so bound by the slavery of sin, that it cannot excite itself, much less devote itself to any thing good; for such a disposition is the beginning of a conversion to God, which in the Scriptures is attributed solely to Divine grace. Thus Jeremiah prays to the Lord to convert or turn him, if he would have him to be turned. (c) Whence the Prophet, in the same chapter, describing the spiritual redemption of the faithful, says, "The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he;" (d) alluding to the strong fetters with which the sinner is bound as long as he is deserted by the Lord, and continues under the yoke of the devil. Nevertheless there still remains the faculty of will, which with the strongest propensity is inclined to and rushes into sin; for when man subjected himself to this necessity, he was not deprived of his will, but of soundness of will. Bernard properly observes, that we all have a power to will; but that to will what is good, is an advantage; to will what is evil, a defect. Therefore simply to will belongs to man; to will what is evil, to corrupt nature; to will what is good, to grace. Now, when I assert that the will, being deprived of its liberty, is necessarily drawn or led into evil, I should wonder, if any one considered it as a harsh expression, since it has nothing in it absurd, nor is it unsanctioned by the custom of good men. It offends those who know not how to distinguish between necessity and compulsion. But if any one should ask them, whether God is not necessarily good, and whether the devil is not necessarily evil, — what answer will they make? For there is such a close connection between the goodness of God and his Deity, that his being God is not more necessary than his being good. But the devil is by his fall so alienated from communion with all that is good, that he can do nothing but what is evil. But if any one should sacrilegiously object, that little praise is due to God for his goodness, which he is constrained to preserve, — shall we not readily reply, that his inability to do evil arises from his infinite goodness, and not from the impulse of violence? Therefore, if a necessity of doing well impairs not the liberty of the Divine will in doing well; if the devil, who cannot but do evil, nevertheless sins voluntarily; who then will assert

(b) Psalm cxi. 10.

(c) Jer. xxxi. 18.

(d) Jer. xxxi. 11.

that man sins less voluntarily, because he is under a necessity of sinning? This necessity Augustine every where maintains; and even when he was pressed with the cavils of Celestius, who tried to throw an odium on this doctrine, he confidently expressed himself in these terms: "By means of liberty it came to pass that man fell into sin; but now the penal depravity consequent on it, instead of liberty, has introduced necessity." And whenever the mention of this subject occurs, he hesitates not to speak in this manner of the necessary servitude of sin. We must therefore observe this grand point of distinction, that man, having been corrupted by his fall, sins voluntarily, not with reluctance or constraint; with the strongest propensity of disposition, not with violent coercion; with the bias of his own passions, and not with external compulsion: yet such is the pravity of his nature, that he cannot be excited and biassed to any thing but what is evil. If this be true, there is no impropriety in affirming, that he is under a necessity of sinning. Bernard, subscribing to what is said by Augustine, thus expresses himself: "Among all the animals, man alone is free; and yet, by the intervention of sin, he also suffers a species of violence; but from the will, not from nature, so that he is not thereby deprived of his innate liberty." For what is voluntary is also free. And a little after: "The will being, by I know not what corrupt and surprising means, changed for the worse, is itself the author of the necessity to which it is subject; so that neither necessity, being voluntary, can excuse the will, nor the will, being fascinated, can exclude necessity." For this necessity is in some measure voluntary. Afterwards he says, that we are oppressed with a yoke, but no other than that of a voluntary servitude; that therefore our servitude renders us miserable, and our will renders us inexcusable; because the will, when it was free, made itself the slave of sin. At length he concludes, "Thus the soul, in a certain strange and evil manner, under this kind of voluntary and free yet pernicious necessity, is both enslaved and free; enslaved by necessity, free by its will; and, what is more wonderful and more miserable, it is guilty, because free; and enslaved wherein it is guilty; and so therein enslaved wherein it is free." From these passages the reader clearly perceives that I am teaching no novel doctrine, but what was long ago advanced by Augustine, with the universal consent of pious men, and which for nearly a thousand years after was confined to the cloisters of monks. But Lombard, for want of knowing how to distinguish necessity from coercion, gave rise to a pernicious error.

VI. It is necessary, on the other hand, to consider the remedy of Divine grace, by which the depravity of nature is corrected

and healed. For since the Lord, in the assistance which he affords us, bestows on us that which we need, an exhibition of the nature of his work in us will immediately discover the nature of our necessity. When the Apostle tells the Philippians, that he is "confident that he which hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;" (e) by the beginning of a good work he undoubtedly designs the commencement of conversion, which takes place in the will. Therefore God begins the good work in us by exciting in our hearts a love, desire, and ardent pursuit of righteousness; or, to speak more properly, by bending, forming, and directing our hearts towards righteousness; but he completes it, by confirming us to perseverance. That no one may cavil, that the good work is begun by the Lord, inasmuch as the will, which is weak of itself, is assisted by him, the Spirit declares in another place how far the ability of the will reaches, when left to itself. "A new heart also," says he, "will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." (f) Who will assert that the infirmity of the human will is only strengthened by assistance, to enable it efficaciously to aspire to the choice of that which is good, when it actually needs a total transformation and renovation? If there be in a stone any softness, which, by some application, being made more tender, would be flexible in every direction, then I will not deny the flexibility of the human heart to the obedience of rectitude, provided its imperfections are supplied by the grace of God. But if, by this similitude, the Lord intended to show that no good will ever be extracted from our hearts, unless they are entirely renewed, let us not divide between him and us, what he claims exclusively to himself. If, therefore, when God converts us to the pursuit of rectitude, this change is like the transformation of a stone into flesh, it follows, that whatever belongs to our own will is removed, and what succeeds to it is entirely from God. The will, I say, is removed, not considered as the will; because, in the conversion of man, the properties of our original nature remain entire. I assert also, that it is created anew, not that the will then begins to exist, but that it is then converted from an evil into a good one. This I affirm to be done entirely by God, because, according to the testimony of the same Apostle, "we are not sufficient" even "to think." (g) Therefore he elsewhere declares, not merely that God assists the infirmity of our will, or corrects its depravity, but that he "worketh in us to will." (h) Whence

(e) Phil. i. 6. (f) Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. (g) 2 Cor. iii. 5. (h) Phil. ii. 13.

it is easy to infer what I have already remarked, that whatever good is in the human will, is the work of pure grace. In the same sense he elsewhere pronounces that it is "God which worketh all in all." (i) For in that place he is not discussing the government of the universe, but asserting that the praise of all the excellences found in the faithful belongs to God alone. And by using the word "all," he certainly makes God the author of spiritual life from its commencement even to its termination. This is the same as he had before taught in other words, declaring that the faithful are "of God in Christ;" (k) where he evidently intends the new creation, by which what belonged to our common nature is abolished. For we must here understand an implied contrast between Adam and Christ, which he states more plainly in another place, where he teaches that "we are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (l) For by this argument he designs to prove that our salvation is gratuitous, because the beginning of all good is from the second creation, which we obtain in Christ. Now, if we possessed any ability, though ever so small, we should also have some portion of merit. But to annihilate all our pretensions, he argues that we have merited nothing, because "we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained;" in which expressions he again signifies that all the parts of good works, even from the first inclination of the mind, are entirely from God. For this reason the Psalmist, after having said that "he (God) hath made us," that there may be no division of the work, immediately subjoins, "and not we ourselves." (m) That he speaks of regeneration, which is the commencement of the spiritual life, is evident from the context, where it follows immediately after, that "we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." We see, then, that not content with having simply attributed to God the praise of our salvation, he expressly excludes us from all fellowship with him; as though he would say, that man has not even the smallest particle remaining in which he can glory, because all is of God.

VII. But there may be some, who will concede that the will, being, of its own spontaneous inclination, averse to what is good, is converted solely by the power of the Lord; yet in such a manner, that being previously prepared, it has also its own share in the work; that grace, as Augustine teaches, precedes every good work, the will following grace, not leading it, being its companion, not its guide. This unobjectionable observation of that holy man, Peter Lombard preposterously

(i) 1 Cor. xii. 6.

(k) 1 Cor. i. 30.

(l) Eph. ii. 10.

(m) Psalm c. 3.

wrests to an erroneous meaning. Now, I contend that both in the words of the Prophet which I have cited, and in other passages, these two things are clearly signified, that the Lord corrects our depraved will, or rather removes it, and of himself introduces a good one in its place. As it is preceded by grace, I allow you to style it an attendant; but since its reformation is the work of the Lord, it is wrong to attribute to man a voluntary obedience in following the guidance of grace. Therefore it is not a proper expression of Chrysostom, that grace is able to effect nothing without the will, nor the will without grace; as if grace did not produce the will itself, as we have just seen from Paul. Nor was it the intention of Augustine, when he called the human will the companion of grace, to assign to it any secondary office next to grace in the good work; but with a view to refute the nefarious dogma broached by Pelagius, who made the prime cause of salvation to consist in human merit, he contends, what was sufficient for his present argument, that grace is prior to all merit; omitting, at this time, the other question concerning the perpetual efficiency of grace, which is admirably treated by him on other occasions. For when he frequently says, that the Lord precedes the unwilling that he may will, and follows the willing that he may not will in vain, he makes him the sole author of the good work. His language on this subject is too explicit to require much argument. "Men labour," says he, "to discover in our will something that is our own, and not derived from God; and how any such discovery can be made, I know not." In his first book against Pelagius and Celestius, where he explains that declaration of Christ, "Every man that hath heard of the Father cometh unto me," (n) he says, that "the will is assisted so as to enable it not only to know its duty, but what it knows, also to do." And thus when God teaches not by the letter of the law, but by the grace of the Spirit, he teaches in such a manner, that whatever each one has learned, he not only sees in knowing it, but desires in willing, and performs in doing.

VIII. And as we are now engaged on the principal point of the argument, let us give the reader a summary of the doctrine, and prove it by a few very clear testimonies of Scripture; and then, that no one may accuse us of perverting the Scripture, let us also show that the truth which we assert to be deduced from the Scripture is not destitute of the support of this holy man; I mean Augustine. For I conceive it is unnecessary to recite in regular order all the passages which might be adduced from the Scriptures in confirmation of our opinion; provided

that the selection, which shall be made, prepares a way to the understanding of all the rest, which are frequently to be found. Nor do I think that there will be any impropriety in evincing my agreement with that man, to whose authority the consent of the pious pays a great and merited deference. The origin of all good clearly appears, from a plain and certain reason, to be from no other than from God alone ; for no propensity of the will to any thing good can be found but in the elect. But the cause of election must not be sought in men. Whence we may conclude, that man has not a good will from himself, but that it proceeds from the same decree by which we were elected before the creation of the world. There is also another reason, not dissimilar. For since good volitions and good actions both arise from faith, we must see whence faith itself originates. Now, since the Scripture uniformly proclaims it to be the gratuitous gift of God, it follows that it is the effect of mere grace, when we, who are naturally and completely prone to evil, begin to will any thing that is good. Therefore the Lord, when he mentions these two things in the conversion of his people, that he takes away from them their stony heart, and gives them a heart of flesh, plainly declares, that what originates from ourselves must be removed, that we may be converted to righteousness ; and that whatever succeeds in its place proceeds from himself. Nor is it only in one passage that he announces this ; for he says in Jeremiah, " I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever." (o) And a little after, " I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Again in Ezekiel, " I will give them one heart, and will put a new spirit within you ; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh." (p) He could not more evidently claim to himself and take from us all that is good and upright in our will, than when he declares our conversion to be the creation of a new spirit and of a new heart. For it always follows, that nothing good proceeds from our will till it be renovated ; and that after its renovation, as far as it is good, it is from God, and not from ourselves.

IX. And we find the saints have made this the subject of their prayers. Solomon prayed, " May the Lord incline our hearts unto him to keep his commandments." (q) He shows the stubbornness of our heart, which, unless a new bias be given to it, naturally indulges itself in rebellion against the Divine law. The same petition is offered by the Psalmist : " Incline my heart unto thy testimonies." (r) For we should always remark the opposition between the perverse bias of the

(o) Jer. xxxii. 39.

(p) Ezek. xi. 19.

(q) 1 Kings viii. 56.

(r) Psalm cxix. 36.

heart, which inclines it to rebellion, and this correction, which constrains it to obedience. But when David, perceiving himself to be for a time deprived of the direction of grace, prays that God would "create in" him "a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within" him, (s) does he not acknowledge that all the parts of his heart are full of impurity, and his spirit warped by a depraved obliquity? and by calling the purity which he earnestly implores, the creation of God, does he not ascribe it entirely to him? If any one object, that the petition itself is a proof of a pious and holy affection, the answer is easy, that although David had already partly repented, yet he compares his former state with that melancholy fall, which he had experienced. Assuming the character, therefore, of a man alienated from God, he properly requests for himself all those things which God confers on his elect in regeneration. Resembling a dead man, therefore, he prays to be created anew, that, instead of being the slave of Satan, he may become the instrument of the Holy Spirit. Truly wonderful and monstrous is the extravagance of our pride. God requires of us nothing more severe than that we most religiously observe his sabbath, by resting from our own works; but there is nothing which we find more difficult, or to which we are more reluctant, than to bid farewell to our own works, in order to give the works of God their proper place. If there were no obstacle arising from our folly, Christ has given a testimony to his graces, sufficiently clear to prevent them from being wickedly suppressed. "I am the vine," says he, "ye are the branches. My Father is the husbandman. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. For without me ye can do nothing." (t) If we cannot bear fruit of ourselves, any more than a branch can bud after it is torn up from the ground, and deprived of moisture, we must no longer seek for any aptitude in our nature to that which is good. There is no ambiguity in this conclusion, "Without me ye can do nothing." He does not say that we are too weak to be sufficient for ourselves, but reducing us to nothing, excludes every idea of ability, however diminutive. If, being engrafted into Christ, we bear fruit like a vine, which derives the energy of vegetation from the moisture of the earth, from the dew of heaven, and from the benign influences of the sun, I see nothing of our own remaining in any good work, if we preserve entire to God the honour which belongs to him. It is in vain to urge that frivolous subtlety, that the branch already possesses sap, and a fructifying power, and that therefore it does not derive all from the earth, or from the original root,

(s) Psalm li. 10.

(t) John xv. 1, 4, 5.

because it contributes something of its own. For the meaning of Christ is clearly that we are as a dry and worthless log, when separated from him ; because, independently of him, we have no ability to do good, as he says also in another place : " Every plant, which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up." (v) Wherefore the Apostle ascribes all the praise to him in the place already cited. " It is God," says he, " which worketh in you both to will and to do." (w) The first part of a good work is volition, the next an effectual endeavour to perform it ; God is the author of both. Therefore we rob the Lord, if we arrogate any thing to ourselves either in volition or in execution. If God were said to assist the infirmity of our will, then there would be something left to us ; but since he is said to produce the will, all the good that is in it, is placed without us. And because the good will is still oppressed by the burden of our flesh, so that it cannot extricate itself, he has added, that in struggling with the difficulties of that conflict, we are supplied with constancy of exertion to carry our volitions into effect. For otherwise there would be no truth in what he elsewhere teaches, that " it is the same God which worketh all in all," (x) which we have before shown comprehends the whole course of the spiritual life. For which reason David, after having prayed that the way of God may be discovered to him, that he may walk in his truth, immediately adds, " Unite my heart to fear thy name." (y) In these words he intimates, that even good men are subject to so many distractions of mind, that they soon wander and fall, unless they are strengthened to persevere. For the same reason, in another passage, having prayed that his steps might be ordered in the word of the Lord, he likewise implores strength for a warfare : " Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." (z) In this manner, therefore, the Lord both begins and completes the good work in us ; that it may be owing to him, that the will conceives a love for what is right, that it is inclined to desire it, and is excited and impelled to endeavour to attain it ; and then that the choice, desire, and endeavour do not fail, but proceed even to the completion of the desired effect ; lastly, that a man proceeds with constancy in them, and perseveres even to the end.

X. And he moves the will, not according to the system maintained and believed for many ages, in such a manner that it would afterwards be at our option either to obey the impulse or to resist it, but by an efficacious influence. The observation, therefore, so frequently repeated by Chrysostom, that " Whom God draws, he draws willing," we are obliged to

(v) Matt. xv. 13.

(w) Phil. ii. 13.

(x) 1 Cor. xii. 6.

(y) Psalm lxxxvi. 11.

(z) Psalm cxix. 133.

reject, being an insinuation that God only waits for us with his hand extended, if we choose to accept his assistance. We grant that such was the primitive condition of man during his state of integrity, that he could incline to the one side or the other ; but since Adam has taught us by his own example how miserable free will is, unless God give us both will and power, what will become of us if he impart his grace to us in that small proportion ? Nay, we obscure and diminish his grace by our ingratitude. For the Apostle does not teach that the grace of a good will is offered to us for our acceptance, but that he "worketh in us to will ;" which is equivalent to saying, that the Lord, by his Spirit, directs, inclines, and governs our heart, and reigns in it as in his own possession. Nor does he promise by Ezekiel that he will give to the elect a new spirit, only that they may be able to walk, but that they may actually walk, in his precepts. (a) Nor can the declaration of Christ, "Every man that hath heard of the Father cometh unto me," (b) be understood in any other sense than as a proof of the positive efficacy of Divine grace ; as Augustine also contends. This grace the Lord deigns not to give to any person promiscuously, according to the observation commonly attributed, if I mistake not, to Occam, that it is denied to no man who does what he can. Men are to be taught, indeed, that the Divine benignity is free to all who seek it, without any exception ; but since none begin to seek it, but those who have been inspired by heavenly grace, not even this diminutive portion ought to be taken from his praise. This is the privilege of the elect, that, being regenerated by the Spirit of God, they are led and governed by his direction. Wherefore Augustine as justly ridicules those who arrogate to themselves any part of a good volition, as he reprehends others, who suppose that to be given promiscuously to all, which is the special evidence of gratuitous election. "Nature," says he, "is common to all men, but not grace." He calls it "a transparent subtlety, which shines merely with vanity, when that is extended generally to all, which God confers on whom he chooses." But elsewhere, "How have you come ? by believing. Be afraid, lest while you arrogate to yourself the discovery of the way of righteousness, you perish from the way of righteousness. I am come, you say, by free will ; I am come through my own choice. Why are you inflated with pride ? Will you know that this also is given to you ? Hear him proclaiming, 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.'" (c) And it incontrovertibly follows, from the words of John, that the hearts of the pious are divinely governed with such effect, that they follow with an af-

(a) Ezek. xi. 19, 20 ; xxxvi. 27.

(b) John vi. 45.

(c) John vi. 44.

fection which nothing can alter. "Whosoever is born of God," he says, "cannot sin; for his seed remaineth in him." (d) For we see that the neutral, inefficacious impulse imagined by the sophists, which every one would be at liberty to obey or resist, is evidently excluded, where it is asserted that God gives a constancy that is effectual to perseverance.

XI. Concerning perseverance there would have been no doubt that it ought to be esteemed the gratuitous gift of God, had it not been for the prevalence of a pestilent error, that it is dispensed according to the merit of men, in proportion to the gratitude which each person has discovered for the grace bestowed on him. But as that opinion arose from the supposition that it was at our own option to reject or accept the offered grace of God, this notion being exploded, the other falls of course. Though here is a double error; for beside teaching that our gratitude for the grace first bestowed on us, and our legitimate use of that grace, are remunerated by subsequent blessings, they add also, that now grace does not operate alone in us, but only coöperates with us. On the first point, we must admit that the Lord, while he daily enriches and loads his servants with new communications of his grace, perceiving the work which he has begun in them grateful and acceptable, discovers something in them which he blesses with still greater degrees of grace. And this is implied in the following declarations: "Unto every one that hath, shall be given." And, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." (e) But here two errors must be avoided; the legitimate use of the grace first bestowed must not be said to be rewarded with subsequent degrees of grace, as though man, by his own industry, rendered the grace of God efficacious; nor must it be accounted a remuneration in such a sense as to cease to be esteemed the free favour of God. I grant, then, that this Divine benediction is to be expected by the faithful, that the better they have used the former measures of grace, they shall afterwards be enriched with proportionably greater degrees of it. But I assert that this use also is from the Lord, and that this remuneration proceeds from his gratuitous benevolence. They are equally awkward and unhappy in their use of the trite distinction of operating and coöperating grace. Augustine has used it indeed, but softens it by a suitable definition; that God in coöperating completes what in operating he begins, and that it is the same grace, but derives its name from the different mode of its efficiency. Whence it follows, that he makes no partition of the work between God and us, as though there

(d) 1 John iii. 9.

(e) Matt. xxv. 23, 29. Luke xix. 17, 26.

were a mutual concurrence from the respective exertions of each ; but that he only designates the multiplication of grace. To the same purpose is what he elsewhere asserts, that the good will of man precedes many of the gifts of God, but is itself one of their number. Whence it follows, that he leaves nothing for it to arrogate to itself. This is also particularly expressed by Paul. For having said that "it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do," (*f*) he immediately adds, that he does both "of his own good pleasure," signifying by this expression that these are acts of gratuitous benignity. Now, to their wonted assertion, that after we have admitted the first grace, our own endeavours coöperate with the grace which follows, I reply, if they mean that, after having been once subdued by the Divine power to the obedience of righteousness, we voluntarily advance, and are disposed to follow the guidance of grace, I make no objection. For it is very certain, that where the grace of God reigns, there is such a promptitude of obedience. But whence does this arise but from the Spirit of God, who, uniformly consistent with himself, cherishes and strengthens to a constancy of perseverance that disposition of obedience which he first originated? But if they mean that man derives from himself an ability to coöperate with the grace of God, they are involved in a most pestilent error.

XII. And to this purpose they falsely and ignorantly pervert that observation of the Apostle, "I laboured more abundantly than they all ; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (*g*) For they understand it in this manner ; that because his preference of himself to all others might appear rather too arrogant, he corrects it by referring the praise to the grace of God ; but yet so as to denominate himself a coöperator with grace. It is surprising that so many men, not otherwise erroneous, have stumbled at this imaginary difficulty. For the Apostle does not say that the grace of God laboured with him, to make himself a partner in the labour ; but rather by that correction ascribes the whole praise of the labour to grace alone. "It is not I," says he, "that have laboured, but the grace of God which was with me." They have been deceived by an ambiguity of expression ; but still more by a preposterous translation, in which the force of the Greek article is omitted. For if you translate it literally, he says, not that grace was coöperative with him, but that the grace which was with him was the author of all. And the same is maintained by Augustine, though briefly, yet without obscurity, when he thus expresses himself: "The good will of man precedes many of the gifts of God, but not all. But of those which it

(*f*) Phil. ii. 13.(*g*) 1 Cor. xv. 10.

precedes it is itself one." Then follows this reason ; because it is written, "The God of my mercy shall prevent me." (*h*) And, "Mercy shall follow me." (*i*) It prevents the unwilling, that he may will ; it follows the willing, that he may not will in vain." With this agrees Bernard, who introduces the Church, saying, "Draw me unwilling, to make me willing ; draw me inactive, to make me run."

XIII. Now, let us hear Augustine speak in his own words, lest the sophists of the Sorbonne, those Pelagians of the present age, according to their usual custom, accuse us of opposing the whole current of antiquity. In this they imitate their father Pelagius, by whom Augustine was formerly obliged to enter into the same field of controversy. In his treatise *De Corr. et Grat.*, addressed to Valentine, he treats very much at large what I shall recite briefly, but in his own words : "That to Adam was given the grace of persevering in good if he chose ; that grace is given to us to will, and by willing to overcome concupiscence. That Adam therefore had the power if he had the will, but not the will that he might have the power ; but that it is given to us to have both the will and the power. That the primitive liberty was a power to abstain from sin, but that ours is much greater, being an inability to commit sin." And lest he should be supposed to speak of the perfection to be enjoyed after the attainment of a state of immortality, as Lombard misinterprets his meaning, he presently removes this difficulty. For he says, "the will of the saints is so inflamed by the Holy Spirit, that they therefore have an ability, because they have such a will ; and that their having such a will proceeds from the operations of God." For if, amidst such great weakness, which still requires "strength" to be "made perfect" (*k*) for the repressing of pride, they were left to their own will, so as to have ability, through the Divine assistance, if they were willing, and God did not operate in them to produce that will ; among so many temptations and infirmities their will would fail, and therefore they could not possibly persevere. The infirmity of the human will, then, is succoured, that it may be invariably and inseparably actuated by Divine grace, and so, notwithstanding all its weakness, may not fail. He afterwards discusses more at large how our hearts necessarily follow the impulse of God ; and he asserts that the Lord draws men with their own wills, but that those wills are such as he himself has formed. Now, we have a testimony from the mouth of Augustine to the point which we are principally endeavouring to establish ; that grace is not merely offered by the Lord to be either received or rejected, according to the free

(*h*) Psalm lix. 10.(*i*) Psalm xxiii. 6.(*k*) 2 Cor. xii. 9.

choice of each individual, but that it is grace which produces both the choice and the will in the heart ; so that every subsequent good work is the fruit and effect of it, and that it is obeyed by no other will but that which it has produced. For this is his language also in another place — that it is grace alone which performs every good work in us.

XIV. When he observes that the will is not taken away by grace, but only changed from a bad one into a good one, and when it is good, assisted ; he only intends that man is not drawn in such a manner as to be carried away by an external impulse, without any inclination of his mind ; but that he is internally so disposed as to obey from his very heart. That grace is specially and gratuitously given to the elect, he maintains in an epistle to Boniface, in the following language : “ We know that the grace of God is not given to all men ; and that to them to whom it is given, it is given neither according to the merits of works, nor according to the merits of will, but by gratuitous favour ; and to those to whom it is not given, we know that it is not given by the righteous judgment of God.” And in the same epistle, he strenuously combats that opinion, which supposes that subsequent grace is given to the merits of men, because by not rejecting the first grace they showed themselves worthy of it. For he wishes Pelagius to allow that grace is necessary to us for every one of our actions, and is not a retribution of our works, that it may be acknowledged to be pure grace. But the subject cannot be comprised in a more concise summary than in the eighth chapter of his treatise addressed to Valentine ; where he teaches, that the human will obtains, not grace by liberty, but liberty by grace ; that being impressed by the same grace with a disposition of delight, it is formed for perpetuity ; that it is strengthened with invincible fortitude ; that while grace reigns, it never falls, but, deserted by grace, falls immediately ; that by the gratuitous mercy of the Lord, it is converted to what is good, and, being converted, perseveres in it ; that the first direction of the human will to that which is good, and its subsequent constancy, depend solely on the will of God, and not on any merit of man. Thus there is left to man such a free will, if we choose to give it that appellation, as he describes in another place, that he can neither be converted to God nor continue in God but by grace ; and that all the ability which he has is derived from grace.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OPERATION OF GOD IN THE HEARTS OF MEN.

It has now, I apprehend, been sufficiently proved, that man is so enslaved by sin, as to be of his own nature incapable of an effort, or even an aspiration, towards that which is good. We have also laid down a distinction between coaction and necessity, from which it appears that while he sins necessarily, he nevertheless sins voluntarily. But since, while he is devoted to the servitude of the devil, he seems to be actuated by his will, rather than by his own, it remains for us to explain the nature of both kinds of influence. There is also this question to be resolved, whether any thing is to be attributed to God in evil actions, in which the Scripture intimates that some influence of his is concerned. Augustine somewhere compares the human will to a horse, obedient to the direction of his rider; and God and the devil he compares to riders. "If God rides it, he, like a sober and skilful rider, manages it in a graceful manner; stimulates its tardiness; restrains its immoderate celerity; represses its wantonness and wildness; tames its perverseness, and conducts it into the right way. But if the devil has taken possession of it, he, like a foolish and wanton rider, forces it through pathless places, hurries it into ditches, drives it down over precipices, and excites it to obstinacy and ferocity." With this similitude, as no better occurs, we will at present be content. When the will of a natural man is said to be subject to the power of the devil, so as to be directed by it, the meaning is, not that it resists and is compelled to a reluctant submission, as masters compel slaves to an unwilling performance of their commands, but that, being fascinated by the fallacies of Satan, it necessarily submits itself to all his directions. For those whom the Lord does not favour with the government of his Spirit, he abandons, in righteous judgment, to the influence of Satan. Wherefore the Apostle says, that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," who are destined to destruction, "lest the light of the gospel should shine unto them." (*l*) And in another place, that he "worketh in the children of disobedience." (*m*) The blinding of the wicked, and all those enormities which attend it, are called the works of Satan; the cause of which must nevertheless be sought

(*l*) 2 Cor. iv. 4.(*m*) Eph. ii. 2.

only in the human will, from which proceeds the root of evil, and in which rests the foundation of the kingdom of Satan, that is, sin.

II. Very different, in such instances, is the method of the Divine operation. And that we may have a clearer view of it, let us take as an example the calamity which holy Job suffered from the Chaldeans. (n) The Chaldeans massacred his shepherds, and committed hostile depredations on his flock. Now, the wickedness of their procedure is evident; yet in these transactions Satan was not unconcerned; for with him the history states the whole affair to have originated. But Job himself recognizes in it the work of the Lord, whom he asserts to have taken from him those things of which he had been plundered by the Chaldeans. How can we refer the same action to God, to Satan, and to man, as being each the author of it, without either excusing Satan by associating him with God, or making God the author of evil? Very easily, if we examine, first, the end for which the action was designed, and secondly, the manner in which it was effected. The design of the Lord is to exercise the patience of his servant by adversity; Satan endeavours to drive him to despair: the Chaldeans, in defiance of law and justice, desire to enrich themselves by the property of another. So great a diversity of design makes a great distinction in the action. There is no less difference in the manner. The Lord permits his servant to be afflicted by Satan: the Chaldeans, whom he commissions to execute his purpose, he permits and resigns to be impelled by Satan: Satan, with his envenomed stings, instigates the minds of the Chaldeans, otherwise very depraved, to perpetrate the crime: they furiously rush into the act of injustice, and overwhelm themselves in criminality. Satan therefore is properly said to work in the reprobate, in whom he exercises his dominion; that is, the kingdom of iniquity. God also is said to work in a way proper to himself, because Satan, being the instrument of his wrath, turns himself hither and thither at his appointment and command, to execute his righteous judgments. Here I allude not to the universal influence of God, by which all creatures are sustained, and from which they derive an ability to perform whatever they do. I speak only of that special influence which appears in every particular act. We see, then, that the same action is without absurdity ascribed to God, to Satan, and to man; but the variety in the end and in the manner, causes the righteousness of God to shine without the least blemish, and the iniquity of Satan and of man to betray itself to its own disgrace.

(n) Job i.

III. The fathers are sometimes too scrupulous on this subject, and afraid of a simple confession of the truth, lest they should afford an occasion to impiety to speak irreverently and reproachfully of the works of God. Though I highly approve this sobriety, yet I think we are in no danger, if we simply maintain what the Scripture delivers. Even Augustine at one time was not free from this scrupulosity; as when he says that hardening and blinding belong not to the operation, but to the prescience of God. But these subtleties are inconsistent with numerous expressions of the Scripture, which evidently import some intervention of God beyond mere foreknowledge. And Augustine himself, in his fifth book against Julian, contends very largely, that sins proceed not only from the permission or the prescience, but from the power of God, in order that former sins may thereby be punished. So also what they advance concerning permission is too weak to be supported. God is very frequently said to blind and harden the reprobate, and to turn, incline, and influence their hearts, as I have elsewhere more fully stated. But it affords no explication of the nature of this influence to resort to prescience or permission. We answer, therefore, that it operates in two ways. For, since, when his light is removed, nothing remains but darkness and blindness; since, when his Spirit is withdrawn, our hearts harden into stones; since, when his direction ceases, they are warped into obliquity; he is properly said to blind, harden, and incline those whom he deprives of the power of seeing, obeying, and acting aright. The second way, which is much more consistent with strict propriety of language, is, when, for the execution of his judgments, he, by means of Satan, the minister of his wrath, directs their counsels to what he pleases, and excites their wills and strengthens their efforts. Thus, when Moses relates that Sihon the king would not grant a free passage to the people, because God had "hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate," he immediately subjoins the end of God's design: "That he might deliver him into thy hand." (o) Since God willed his destruction, the obduration of his heart, therefore, was the Divine preparation for his ruin.

IV. The following expressions seem to relate to the former method: "He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He taketh away the heart of the chief people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way." (p) Again: "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" (q) For these passages rather indicate what God makes men by deserting them, than show

(o) Deut. ii. 30.

(p) Job xii. 20, 24.

(q) Isaiah lxiii. 17.

how he performs his operations within them. But there are other testimonies, which go further; as those which relate to the hardening of Pharaoh: "I will harden his (Pharaoh's) heart, that he shall not let the people go." (*r*) Afterwards the Lord says, "I have hardened his heart." (*s*) Did he harden it by not mollifying it? That is true; but he did somewhat more, for he delivered his heart to Satan to be confirmed in obstinacy; whence he had before said, "I will harden his heart." The people march out of Egypt; the inhabitants of the country meet them in a hostile manner: by whom were they excited? Moses expressly declared to the people, that it was the Lord who had hardened their hearts. (*t*) The Psalmist, reciting the same history, says, "He turned their heart to hate his people." (*v*) Now, it cannot be said that they fell in consequence of being deprived of the counsel of God. For if they are "hardened" and "turned," they are positively inclined to that point. Besides, whenever it has pleased him to punish the transgressions of his people, how has he executed his work by means of the reprobate? In such a manner that any one may see, that the efficacy of the action proceeded from him, and that they were only the ministers of his will. Wherefore he threatened sometimes that he would call them forth by hissing, (*w*) sometimes that he would use them as a net (*x*) to entangle, sometimes as a hammer (*y*) to strike the people of Israel. But he particularly declared himself to be operative in them, when he called Sennacherib an axe, (*z*) which was both directed and driven by his hand. Augustine somewhere makes the following correct distinction: "that they sin, proceeds from themselves; that in sinning they perform this or that particular action, is from the power of God, who divides the darkness according to his pleasure."

V. Now that the ministry of Satan is concerned in instigating the reprobate, whenever the Lord directs them hither or thither by his providence, may be sufficiently proved even from one passage. For it is frequently asserted in Samuel that an evil spirit of the Lord, and an evil spirit from the Lord, either agitated or quitted Saul. (*a*) To refer this to the Holy Spirit were impious. An impure spirit, therefore, is called a spirit of God, because it acts according to his command and by his power, being rather an instrument in the performance of the action, than itself the author of it. We must add, also, what is advanced by Paul, that "God shall send strong delusion, that they who believed not the truth should believe a lie." (*b*) Yet

(*r*) Exod. iv. 21.(*s*) Exod. vii. 3.(*t*) Deut. ii. 30.(*v*) Psalm cv. 25.(*w*) Isaiah v. 26; vii. 18.(*x*) Ezek. xii. 13; xvii. 20.(*y*) Jer. i. 23.(*z*) Isaiah x. 15.(*a*) 1 Sam. xvi. 14; xviii. 19; xix. 19.(*b*) 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

there is always a wide difference, even in the same work, between the operation of God and the attempts of Satan and wicked men. He makes the evil instruments, which he has in his hand, and can turn as he pleases, to be subservient to his justice. They, as they are evil, produce the iniquity which the depravity of their nature has conceived. The other arguments, which tend to vindicate the majesty of God from every calumny, and to obviate the cavils of the impious, have already been advanced in the chapter concerning Providence. For, at present, I only intend briefly to show how Satan reigns in the reprobate man, and how the Lord operates in them both.

VI. But what liberty man possesses in those actions which in themselves are neither righteous nor wicked, and pertain rather to the corporeal than to the spiritual life, although we have before hinted, has not yet been explicitly stated. Some have admitted him in such things to possess a free choice; rather, as I suppose, from a reluctance to dispute on a subject of no importance, than from an intention of positively asserting that which they concede. Now, though I grant that they who believe themselves to be possessed of no power to justify themselves, believe what is principally necessary to be known in order to salvation, yet I think that this point also should not be neglected, that we may know it to be owing to the special favour of God, whenever our mind is disposed to choose that which is advantageous for us; whenever our will inclines to it; and, on the other hand, whenever our mind and understanding avoid what would otherwise hurt us. And the power of the providence of God extends so far, as not only to cause those events to succeed which he foresees will be best, but also to incline the wills of men to the same objects. Indeed, if we view the administration of external things with our own reason, we shall not doubt their subjection to the human will; but if we listen to the numerous testimonies, which proclaim that in these things also the hearts of men are governed by the Lord, they will constrain us to submit the will itself to the special influence of God. Who conciliated the minds of the Egyptians towards the Israelites, (c) so as to induce them to lend them the most valuable of their furniture? They would never have been induced to do this of their own accord. It follows, therefore, that their hearts were guided by the Lord rather than by an inclination of their own. And Jacob, if he had not been persuaded that God infuses various dispositions into men according to his pleasure, would not have said concerning his son Joseph, whom he thought to be some profane Egyptian, "God Almighty give you mercy before the man." (d)

(c) Exod. xi. 3.

(d) Gen. xliii. 14.

As the whole Church confesses in the Psalms, that, when God chose to compassionate her, he softened the hearts of the cruel nations into clemency. (e) Again, when Saul was so inflamed with rage, as to prepare himself for war, it is expressly mentioned as the cause, that he was impelled by the Spirit of God. (f) Who diverted the mind of Absalom from adopting the counsel of Ahithophel, which used to be esteemed as an oracle? (g) Who inclined Rehoboam to be persuaded by the counsel of the young men? (h) Who caused the nations, that before were very valiant, to feel terror at the approach of the Israelites? Rahab the harlot confessed that this was the work of God. Who, on the other hand, dejected the minds of the Israelites with fear and terror, but he who had threatened in the law that he would "send a faintness into their hearts?" (i)

VII. Some one will object, that these are peculiar examples, to the rule of which, things ought by no means universally to be reduced. But I maintain, that they are sufficient to prove that for which I contend; that God, whenever he designs to prepare the way for his providence, inclines and moves the wills of men even in external things, and that their choice is not so free, but that its liberty is subject to the will of God. That your mind depends more on the influence of God, than on the liberty of your own choice, you must be constrained to conclude, whether you are willing or not, from this daily experience, that in affairs of no perplexity your judgment and understanding frequently fail; that in undertakings not arduous your spirits languish; on the other hand, in things the most obscure, suitable advice is immediately offered; in things great and perilous, your mind proves superior to every difficulty. And thus I explain the observation of Solomon, "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them." (k) For he appears to me to speak, not of their creation, but of the peculiar favour of God displayed in their performing their functions. When he says, that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will;" (l) under one species he clearly comprehends the whole genus. For if the will of any man be free from all subjection, that privilege belongs eminently to the will of a king, which exercises a government in some measure over the wills of others; but if the will of the king be subject to the power of God, ours cannot be exempted from the same authority. Augustine has a remarkable passage on this subject: "The Scripture, if it be diligently examined, shows, not only that the good wills of men, which he turns from evil into good, and directs to good actions and to eternal

(e) Psalm cvi. 46. (f) 1 Sam. xi. 6. (g) 2 Sam. xvii. 14. (h) 1 Kings xii. 10.

(i) Lev. xxvi. 36.

(k) Prov. xx. 12.

(l) Prov. xxi. 1.

life, but also that those wills which relate to the present life, are subject to the power of God, so that he, by a most secret, but yet a most righteous judgment, causes them to be inclined whither he pleases, and when he pleases, either for the communication of benefits, or for the infliction of punishments."

VIII. Here let the reader remember, that the ability of the human will is not to be estimated from the event of things, as some ignorant men are preposterously accustomed to do. For they conceive themselves fully and ingeniously to establish the servitude of the human will, because even the most exalted monarchs have not all their desires fulfilled. But this ability, of which we speak, is to be considered within man, and not to be measured by external success. For in the dispute concerning free will, the question is not, whether a man, notwithstanding external impediments, can perform and execute whatever he may have resolved in his mind, but whether in every case his judgment exerts freedom of choice, and his will freedom of inclination. If men possess both these, then Attilius Regulus, when confined to the small extent of a cask stuck round with nails, will possess as much free will as Augustus Cæsar, when governing a great part of the world with his nod.

CHAPTER V.

A REFUTATION OF THE OBJECTIONS COMMONLY URGED IN SUPPORT OF FREE WILL.

ENOUGH might appear to have been already said on the servitude of the human will, did not they, who endeavour to overthrow it with a false notion of liberty, allege, on the contrary, certain reasons in opposition to our sentiments. First, they collect together some absurdities, in order to render it odious, as if it were abhorrent to common sense; and then they attack it with testimonies of Scripture. Both these weapons we will repel in order. If sin, say they, be necessary, then it ceases to be sin; if it be voluntary, then it may be avoided. These were also the weapons used by Pelagius in his attacks on Augustine; with whose authority, however, we wish not to urge them, till we shall have given some satisfaction on the subject itself. I deny, then, that sin is the less criminal, because it is necessary; I deny also the other consequence, which they infer, that it is avoidable because it is voluntary. For, if any one wish to dispute with God, and to escape his judgment

by the pretext of having been incapable of acting otherwise, he is prepared with an answer, which we have elsewhere advanced, that it arises not from creation, but from the corruption of nature, that men, being enslaved by sin, can will nothing but what is evil. For whence proceeded that impotence, of which the ungodly would gladly avail themselves, but from Adam voluntarily devoting himself to the tyranny of the devil? Hence, therefore, the corruption with which we are firmly bound. It originated in the revolt of the first man from his Maker. If all men are justly accounted guilty of this rebellion, let them not suppose themselves excused by necessity, in which very thing they have a most evident cause of their condemnation. And this I have before clearly explained, and have given an example in the devil himself, which shows, that he who sins necessarily, sins no less voluntarily; and also in the elect angels, whose will, though it cannot swerve from what is good, ceases not to be a will. Bernard also judiciously inculcates the same doctrine, that we are, therefore, the more miserable because our necessity is voluntary; which yet constrains us to be so devoted to it, that we are, as we have already observed, the slaves of sin. The second branch of their argument is erroneous; because it makes an improper transition from what is voluntary to what is free; but we have before evinced, that a thing may be done voluntarily, which yet is not the subject of free choice.

II. They add, that unless both virtues and vices proceed from the free choice of the will, it is not reasonable either that punishments should be inflicted, or that rewards should be conferred on man. This argument, though first advanced by Aristotle, yet I grant is used on some occasions by Chrysostom and Jerome. That it was familiar to the Pelagians, however, Jerome himself does not dissemble, but even relates their own words: "If the grace of God operates in us, then the crown will be given to grace, not to us who labour." In regard to punishments, I reply, that they are justly inflicted on us, from whom the guilt of sin proceeds. For of what importance is it, whether sin be committed with a judgment free or enslaved, so it be committed with the voluntary bias of the passions; especially as man is proved to be a sinner, because he is subject to the servitude of sin? With respect to rewards of righteousness, where is the great absurdity, if we confess that they depend rather on the Divine benignity than on our own merits? How often does this recur in Augustine, "that God crowns not our merits, but his own gifts; and that they are called rewards, not as though they were due to our merits, but because they are retributions to the graces already conferred on us!" They discover great acuteness in this observation, that

there remains no room for merits, if they originate not from free will; but in their opinion of the erroneousness of our sentiment they are greatly mistaken. For Augustine hesitates not on all occasions to inculcate as certain, what they think it impious to acknowledge; as where he says, "What are the merits of any man? When he comes not with a merited reward, but with free grace, he alone being free and a deliverer from sins, finds all men sinners." Again: "If you receive what is your due, you must be punished. What then is done? God has given you not merited punishment, but unmerited grace. If you wish to be excluded from grace, boast your merits." Again: "You are nothing of yourself; sins are yours, merits belong to God; you deserve punishment; and when you come to be rewarded, he will crown his own gifts, not your merits." In the same sense he elsewhere teaches that grace proceeds not from merit, but merit from grace. And a little after he concludes, that God with his gifts preceeds all merits, that thence he may elicit his other merits, and gives altogether freely, because he discovers nothing as a cause of salvation. But what necessity is there for further quotations, when his writings are full of such passages? But the Apostle will even better deliver them from this error, if they will hear from what origin he deduces the glory of the saints. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (m) Why, then, according to the Apostle, are the faithful crowned? Because by the mercy of the Lord, and not by their own industry, they are elected, and called, and justified. Farewell, then, this vain fear, that there will be an end of all merits if free will be overturned. For it is a proof of extreme folly, to be terrified and to fly from that to which the Scripture calls us. "If," says he, "thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (n) You see that he divests free will of every thing, with the express design of leaving no room for merits. But yet, the beneficence and liberality of God being inexhaustible and various, those graces which he confers on us, because he makes them ours, he rewards, just as if they were our own virtues.

III. They further allege what may appear to be borrowed from Chrysostom, that if our will has not this ability to choose good or evil, the partakers of the same nature must be either all evil or all good. And not very far from this is the writer, whoever he was, of the treatise *On the Calling of the Gentiles*, which is circulated under the name of Ambrose, when he argues, that no man would ever recede from the faith, unless

(m) Rom. viii. 29.

(n) 1 Cor. iv. 7.

the grace of God left us the condition of mutability. In which it is surprising that such great men were so inconsistent with themselves. For how did it not occur to Chrysostom, that it is the election of God, which makes this difference between men? We are not afraid to allow, what Paul very strenuously asserts, that all, without exception, are depraved and addicted to wickedness; but with him we add, that the mercy of God does not permit all to remain in depravity. Therefore, since we all naturally labour under the same disease, they alone recover to whom the Lord has been pleased to apply his healing hand. The rest, whom he passes by in righteous judgment, putrefy in their corruption till they are entirely consumed. And it is from the same cause, that some persevere to the end, and others decline and fall in the midst of their course. For perseverance itself also is a gift of God, which he bestows not on all men promiscuously, but imparts to whom he pleases. If we inquire the cause of the difference, why some persevere with constancy, and others fail through instability, no other can be found, but that God sustains the former by his power, that they perish not, and does not communicate the same strength to the latter, that they may be examples of inconstancy.

IV. They urge further, that exhortations are given in vain, that the use of admonitions is superfluous, and that reproofs are ridiculous, if it be not in the power of the sinner to obey. When similar objections were formerly made to Augustine, he was obliged to write his treatise *On Correction and Grace*; in which, though he copiously refutes them, he calls his adversaries to this conclusion: "O man, in the commandment learn what is your duty: in correction learn, that through your own fault you have it not: in prayer learn whence you may receive what you wish to enjoy." There is nearly the same argument in the treatise *On the Spirit and Letter*, in which he maintains that God does not regulate the precepts of his law by the ability of men, but when he has commanded what is right, freely gives to his elect ability to perform it. This is not a subject that requires a prolix discussion. First, we are not alone in this cause, but have the support of Christ and all the Apostles. Let our opponents consider how they can obtain the superiority in a contest with such antagonists. Does Christ, who declares that without him we can do nothing, (o) on that account the less reprehend and punish those who without him do what is evil? Does he therefore relax in his exhortations to every man to practise good works? How severely does Paul censure the Corinthians for their neglect of charity! (p) Yet he earnestly prays that charity may be given them by the Lord. In his

(o) John xv. 5.

(p) 1 Cor. iii. 3.

Epistle to the Romans he declares that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy:" (*q*) yet afterwards he refrains not from the use of admonition, exhortation, and reproof. Why do they not, therefore, remonstrate with the Lord, not to lose his labour in such a manner, by requiring of men those things which he alone can bestow, and punishing those things which are committed for want of his grace? Why do they not admonish Paul to spare those who are unable to will or run without the previous mercy of God, of which they are now destitute? As though truly the Lord has not the best reason for his doctrine, which readily presents itself to those who religiously seek it. Paul clearly shows how far doctrine, exhortation, and reproof, can of themselves avail towards producing a change of heart, when he says that "neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but" that the efficacy is solely from "God that giveth the increase." (*r*) Thus we see that Moses severely sanctions the precepts of the law, and the Prophets earnestly urge and threaten transgressors; whilst, nevertheless, they acknowledge, that men never begin to be wise till a heart is given them to understand; that it is the peculiar work of God to circumcise the heart, and instead of a stony heart to give a heart of flesh; to inscribe his law in men's minds; in a word, to render his doctrine effectual by a renovation of the soul.

V. What, then, it will be inquired, is the use of exhortations? I reply, If the impious despise them with obstinate hearts, they will serve for a testimony against them, when they shall come to the tribunal of the Lord; and even in the present state they wound their consciences; for however the most audacious person may deride them, he cannot disapprove of them in his heart. But it will be said, What can a miserable sinner do, if the softness of heart, which is necessary to obedience, be denied him? I ask, What excuse can he plead, seeing that he cannot impute the hardness of his heart to any one but himself? The impious, therefore, who are ready, if possible, to ridicule the Divine precepts and exhortations, are, in spite of their own inclinations, confounded by their power. But the principal utility should be considered in regard to the faithful, in whom as the Lord performs all things by his Spirit, so he neglects not the instrumentality of his word, but uses it with great efficacy. Let it be allowed, then, as it ought to be, that all the strength of the pious consists in the grace of God, according to this expression of the Prophet: "I will give them a new heart, that they may walk in my statutes." (*s*) But you will object, Why are they admonished of their duty, and not

(*q*) Rom. ix. 16.(*r*) 1 Cor. iii. 7.(*s*) Ezek. xi. 19, 20.

rather left to the direction of the Spirit? Why are they importuned with exhortations, when they cannot make more haste than is produced by the impulse of the Spirit? Why are they chastised, if they have ever deviated from the right way, seeing that they erred through the necessary infirmity of the flesh? I reply, Who art thou, O man, that wouldest impose laws upon God? If it be his will to prepare us by exhortation for the reception of this grace, by which obedience to the exhortation is produced, what have you to censure in this economy? If exhortations and reproofs were of no other advantage to the pious, than to convince them of sin, they ought not on that account to be esteemed wholly useless. Now, since, by the internal operation of the Spirit, they are most effectual to inflame the heart with a love of righteousness, to shake off sloth, to destroy the pleasure and poisonous sweetness of iniquity, and, on the contrary, to render it hateful and burdensome, who can dare to reject them as superfluous? If any one would desire a plainer answer, let him take it thus: The operations of God on his elect are twofold — internally, by his Spirit, externally, by his word. By his Spirit illuminating their minds and forming their hearts to the love and cultivation of righteousness, he makes them new creatures. By his word he excites them to desire, seek, and obtain the same renovation. In both he displays the efficacy of his power, according to the mode of his dispensation. When he addresses the same word to the reprobate, though it produces not their correction, yet he makes it effectual for another purpose, that they may be confounded by the testimony of their consciences now, and be rendered more inexcusable at the day of judgment. Thus Christ, though he pronounces that “no man can come to him, except the Father draw him,” and that the elect come when they have “heard and learned of the Father,” (*t*) yet himself neglects not the office of a teacher, but with his own mouth sedulously invites those who need the internal teachings of the Holy Spirit to enable them to derive any benefit from his instructions. With respect to the reprobate, Paul suggests that teaching is not useless, because it is to them “the savour of death unto death,” but “a sweet savour unto God.” (*v*)

VI. Our adversaries are very laborious in collecting testimonies of Scripture; and this with a view, since they cannot refute us with their weight, to overwhelm us with their number. But as in battles, when armies come to close combat, the weak multitude, whatever pomp and ostentation they may display, are soon defeated and routed, so it will be very easy for us to vanquish them, with all their multitude. For as all

(*t*) John vi. 44, 45.(*v*) 2 Cor. ii. 16.

the passages, which they abuse in their opposition to us, when properly classed and distributed, centre in a very few topics, one answer will be sufficient for many of them ; it will not be necessary to dwell on a particular explication of each. Their principal argument they derive from the precepts ; which they suppose to be so proportioned to our ability, that whatever they can be proved to require, it necessarily follows we are capable of performing. They proceed, therefore, to a particular detail of them, and by them measure the extent of our strength. Either, say they, God mocks us, when he commands holiness, piety, obedience, chastity, love, and meekness, and when he forbids impurity, idolatry, unchastity, anger, robbery, pride, and the like ; or he requires only such things as we have power to perform. Now, almost all the precepts which they collect, may be distributed into three classes. Some require the first conversion to God ; others simply relate to the observation of the law ; others enjoin perseverance in the grace of God already received. Let us first speak of them all in general, and then proceed to the particulars. To represent the ability of man as coëxtensive with the precepts of the Divine law, has indeed for a long time not been unusual, and has some appearance of plausibility ; but it has proceeded from the grossest ignorance of the law. For those who think it an enormous crime to say that the observation of the law is impossible, insist on this very cogent argument, that otherwise the law was given in vain. For they argue just as if Paul had never said any thing concerning the law. But, pray, what is the meaning of these expressions — “The law was added because of transgressions ;” “by the law is the knowledge of sin ;” “the law worketh wrath ;” “the law entered that the offence might abound ?” (*w*) Do they imply a necessity of its being limited to our ability, that it might not be given in vain ? Do they not rather show that it was placed far beyond our ability, in order to convince us of our impotence ? According to the definition of the same Apostle, “the end of the commandment is charity.” (*x*) But when he wishes the minds of the Thessalonians to “abound in love,” (*y*) he plainly acknowledges that the law sounds in our ears in vain, unless God inspire the principles of it into our hearts.

VII. Indeed, if the Scripture taught only that the law is the rule of life, to which our conduct ought to be conformed, I would immediately accede to their opinion. But since it carefully and perspicuously states to us various uses of the law, it will be best to consider the operation of the law in man according to that exposition. As far as relates to the present argument,

(*w*) Gal. iii. 19. Rom. iii. 20 ; iv. 15 ; v. 20.

(*x*) 1 Tim. i. 5.

(*y*) 1 Thess. iii. 12.

when it has prescribed any thing to be performed by us, it teaches that the power of obedience proceeds from the goodness of God, and therefore invites us to pray that it may be given us. If there were only a commandment, and no promise, there would be a trial of the sufficiency of our strength to obey the commandment; but since the commands are connected with promises, which declare that we must derive not only subsidiary power, but our whole strength, from the assistance of Divine grace, they furnish abundant evidence that we are not only unequal to the observation of the law, but altogether incapable of it. Wherefore let them no more urge the proportion of our ability to the precepts of the law, as though the Lord had regulated the standard of righteousness, which he designed to give in the law, according to the measure of our imbecility. It should rather be concluded from the promises, how unprepared we are of ourselves, since we stand in such universal need of his grace. But will it, say they, be credited by any, that the Lord addressed his law to stocks and stones? I reply, that no one will attempt to inculcate such a notion. For neither are the impious stocks or stones, when they are taught by the law the contrariety of their dispositions to God, and are convicted of guilt by the testimony of their own minds; nor the pious, when, admonished of their own impotence, they have recourse to the grace of God. To this purpose are the following passages from Augustine: "God gives commands which we cannot perform, that we may know what we ought to request of him. The utility of the precepts is great, if only so much be given to free will, that the grace of God may receive the greater honour. Faith obtains what the law commands; and the law therefore commands, that faith may obtain that which is commanded by the law: moreover God requires faith itself of us, and finds not what he requires, unless he has given what he finds." Again: "Let God give what he enjoins, and let him enjoin what he pleases."

VIII. This will more clearly appear in an examination of the three kinds of precepts which we have already mentioned. The Lord, both in the law and in the prophets, frequently commands us to be converted to him; (*z*) but the Prophet, on the other hand, says, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned." "After that I was turned, I repented," &c. (*a*) He commands us to circumcise our hearts; but he announces by Moses, that this circumcision is the work of his own hand. (*b*) He frequently requires newness of heart; but elsewhere declares that this is his own gift. (*c*) "What God promises," Augustine says, "we do not perform ourselves through free will or nature; but

(*z*) Joel ii. 12.(*a*) Jer. xxxi. 18, 19.(*b*) Deut. x. 16, and xxx. 6.(*c*) Jer. iv. 4. Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

he does it himself by his grace." And this is the observation to which he himself assigns the fifth place in his enumeration of Ticonius's rules of Christian doctrine; that we should make a proper distinction between the law and the promises, or between the commandments and grace. This may suffice, in answer to those who from the precepts infer an ability in man to obey them, that they may destroy the grace of God, by which those very precepts are fulfilled. The precepts of the second class are simple, enjoining on us the worship of God, constant submission to his will, observance of his commands, and adherence to his doctrine. But there are innumerable passages, which prove that the highest degree of righteousness, sanctity, piety, and purity, capable of being attained, is his own gift. Of the third class is that exhortation of Paul and Barnabas to the faithful, mentioned by Luke, "to continue in the grace of God." (*d*) But whence the grace of perseverance should be sought, the same Apostle informs us, when he says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord." (*e*) In another place he cautions us to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." (*f*) But because what he there requires could not be performed by men, he prays for the Thessalonians, "that our God would count them worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." (*g*) Thus, also, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, treating of alms, he frequently commends their benevolent and pious disposition; (*h*) yet a little after he gives thanks to God for having inclined the heart of Titus to "accept" or undertake "the exhortation." If Titus could not even use his own tongue to exhort others without having been prompted by God, how should others have been inclined to act, unless God himself had directed their hearts?

IX. Our more subtle adversaries cavil at all these testimonies, because there is no impediment, they say, that prevents our exerting our own ability, and God assisting our weak efforts. They adduce also passages from the Prophets, where the accomplishment of our conversion seems to be divided equally between God and us. "Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you." (*i*) What assistance we receive from the Lord has already been shown, and needs not to be repeated here. I wish only this single point to be conceded to me, that it is in vain to infer our possession of ability to fulfil the law from God's command to us to obey it; since it is evident, that for the performance of all the Divine precepts, the grace of the

(*d*) Acts xiii. 43.(*e*) Eph. vi. 10.(*f*) Eph. iv. 30.(*g*) 2 Thess. i. 11.(*h*) 2 Cor. viii. 1, &c.(*i*) Zech. i. 3.

Legislator is both necessary for us, and promised to us; and hence it follows, that at least more is required of us than we are capable of performing. Nor is it possible for any cavils to explain away that passage of Jeremiah, which assures us, that the covenant of God, made with his ancient people, was frustrated because it was merely a literal one; (*k*) and that it can only be confirmed by the influence of the Spirit, who forms the heart to obedience. Nor does their error derive any support from this passage: "Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you." For this denotes, not that turning of God in which he renovates our hearts to repentance, but that in which he declares his benevolence and kindness by external prosperity; as by adversity he sometimes manifests his displeasure. When the people of Israel, therefore, after having been harassed with miseries and calamities under various forms, complained that God was departed from them, he replies that his benignity will not fail them if they return to rectitude of life, and to himself, who is the standard of righteousness. The passage, then, is miserably perverted, when it is made to represent the work of conversion as divided between God and men. We have observed the greater brevity on these points, because it will be a more suitable place for this argument when we treat of the Law.

X. The second description of arguments is nearly allied to the first. They allege the promises, in which God covenants with our will; such as, "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live." "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (*l*) Again: "If thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove." "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth;" (*m*) and other similar passages. They consider it an absurdity and mockery, that the benefits which the Lord offers in the promises are referred to our will, unless it be in our power either to confirm or to frustrate them. And truly it is very easy to amplify this subject with eloquent complaints, that we are cruelly mocked by the Lord, when he announces that his benignity depends on our will, if that will be not in our own power; that this would be egregious liberality in God, to present his benefits to us in such a manner, that we should have no power to enjoy them; and that there must be a strange certainty in his promises, if they depend on a thing impossible, so that they can never be fulfilled. Concerning

(*k*) Jer. xxxi. 32.(*l*) Amos v. 14. Isaiah i. 19, 20.(*m*) Jer. iv. 1. Deut. xxviii. 1.

promises of this kind, to which a condition is annexed, we shall speak in another place, and evince that there is no absurdity in the impossibility of their completion. With respect to the present question, I deny that God is cruel or insincere to us, when he invites us to merit his favours, though he knows us to be altogether incapable of doing this. For as the promises are offered equally to the faithful and to the impious, they have their use with them both. As by the precepts God disturbs the consciences of the impious, that they may not enjoy too much pleasure in sin without any recollection of his judgments, so in the promises he calls them to attest how unworthy they are of his kindness. For who can deny that it is most equitable and proper for the Lord to bless those who worship him, and severely to punish the despisers of his majesty? God acts, therefore, in a right and orderly manner, when, addressing the impious, who are bound with the fetters of sin, he adds to the promises this condition, that when they shall have departed from their wickedness, they shall then, and not till then, enjoy his favours; even for this sole reason, that they may know that they are deservedly excluded from those benefits which belong to the worshippers of the true God. On the other hand, since he designs by all means to stimulate the faithful to implore his grace, it will not be at all strange, if he tries in his promises also, what we have shown he does with considerable effect in his precepts. Being instructed by the precepts concerning the will of God, we are apprized of our misery, in having our hearts so completely averse to it; and are at the same time excited to invoke his Spirit, that we may be directed by him into the right way. But because our sluggishness is not sufficiently roused by the precepts, God adds his promises, to allure us by their sweetness to the love of his commands. Now, in proportion to our increased love of righteousness will be the increase of our fervour in seeking the grace of God. See how, in these addresses, "If ye be willing," "If ye be obedient," the Lord neither attributes to us an unlimited power to will and to obey, nor yet mocks us on account of our impotence.

XI. The third class of arguments also has a great affinity with the preceding. For they produce passages in which God reproaches an ungrateful people, that it was wholly owing to their own fault that they did not receive blessings of all kinds from his indulgent hand. Of this kind are the following passages: "The Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword; because ye are turned away from the Lord." (n) "Because I called you, but ye answered not, therefore will I do unto this house as I have done

to Shiloh." (o) Again: "This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath." (p) Again: "They obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them." (q) How, say they, could such reproaches be applicable to those who might immediately reply, It is true that we desired prosperity and dreaded adversity; but our not obeying the Lord, or hearkening to his voice, in order to obtain good and to avoid evil, has been owing to our want of liberty, and subjection to the dominion of sin. It is in vain, therefore, to reproach us with evils, which we had no power to avoid. In answer to this, leaving the pretext of necessity, which is but a weak and futile plea, I ask whether they can exculpate themselves from all guilt. For if they are convicted of any fault, the Lord justly reproaches them with their perverseness, as the cause of their not having experienced the advantage of his clemency. Let them answer, then, if they can deny that their own perverse will was the cause of their obstinacy. If they find the source of the evil within themselves, why do they so earnestly inquire after extraneous causes, that they may not appear to have been the authors of their own ruin? But if it be true that sinners are deprived of the favours of God, and chastised with his punishments, for their own sin, and only for their own, there is great reason why they should hear those reproaches from his mouth; that if they obstinately persist in their crimes, they may learn in their calamities rather to accuse and detest their iniquity, than to charge God with unrighteous cruelty; that if they have not cast off all docility, they may become weary of their sins, the demerits of which they see to be misery and ruin, and may return into the good way, acknowledging in a serious confession the very thing for which the Lord rebukes them. And that those reproofs, which are quoted from the Prophets, have produced this beneficial effect on the faithful, is evident from the solemn prayer of Daniel, given us in his ninth chapter. Of the former use of them we find an example in the Jews, to whom Jeremiah is commanded to declare the cause of their miseries; though nothing could befall them, otherwise than the Lord had foretold. "Thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee." (r) For what purpose, then, it will be asked, did they speak to persons that were deaf? It was in order that, in spite of their disinclination and aversion, they might

(o) Jer. vii. 13, 14.

(p) Jer. vii. 23, 29.

(q) Jer. xxxii. 23.

(r) Jer. vii. 27.

know what was declared to them to be true; that it was an abominable sacrilege to transfer to God the guilt of their crimes, which belonged solely to themselves. With these few solutions, we may very easily despatch the immense multitude of testimonies, which the enemies of the grace of God are accustomed to collect, both from the precepts of the law, and from the expostulations directed to transgressors of it, in order to establish the idol of free will. In one psalm the Jews are stigmatized as "a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their heart aright." (*s*) In another, the Psalmist exhorts the men of his age to "harden not their hearts;" (*t*) which implies, that all the guilt of rebellion lies in the perverseness of men. But it is absurd to infer from this passage that the heart is equally flexible to either side; whereas "the preparation" of it is "from the Lord." (*v*) The Psalmist says, "I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes;" (*w*) because he had devoted himself to the service of God without any reluctance, but with a cheerful readiness of mind. Yet he boasts not of being himself the author of this inclination, which in the same psalm he acknowledges to be the gift of God. (*x*) We should remember, therefore, the admonition of Paul, when he commands the faithful to "work out" their "own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in" them "both to will and to do." (*y*) He assigns them a part to perform, that they may not indulge themselves in carnal negligence; but by inculcating "fear and trembling," he humbles them, and reminds them that this very thing, which they are commanded to do, is the peculiar work of God. In this he plainly suggests that the faithful act, if I may be allowed the expression, passively, inasmuch as they are furnished with strength from heaven, that they may arrogate nothing at all to themselves. Wherefore, when Peter exhorts us to "add to" our "faith, virtue," (*z*) he does not allot us an under part to be performed, as though we could do any thing separately, of ourselves; he only arouses the indolence of the flesh, by which faith itself is frequently extinguished. To the same purpose is the exhortation of Paul: "Quench not the Spirit;" (*a*) for slothfulness gradually prevails over the faithful, unless it be corrected. But if any one should infer from this, that it is at his own option to cherish the light offered him, his ignorance will easily be refuted; since this diligence which Paul requires, proceeds only from God. For we are also frequently commanded to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness," (*b*) whilst the Spirit claims the office of sanctifying us exclusively to himself. In short, that

(*s*) Psalm lxxviii. 8.(*t*) Psalm xciv. 8.(*v*) Prov. xvi. 1.(*w*) Psalm cxix. 112.(*x*) Psalm cxix. 33—40.(*y*) Phil. ii. 12.(*z*) 2 Peter i. 5.(*a*) 1 Thess. v. 19.(*b*) 2 Cor. vii. 1.

what properly belongs to God is, by concession, transferred to us, is plain from the words of John: "He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself." (c) The preachers of free will lay hold of this expression, as though we were saved partly by the Divine power, partly by our own; as though we did not receive from heaven this very preservation which the Apostle mentions. Wherefore also Christ prays that his Father would "keep" us "from evil;" (d) and we know that the pious, in their warfare against Satan, obtain the victory by no other arms than those which are furnished by God. Therefore Peter, having enjoined us to "purify" our "souls, in obeying the truth," immediately adds, as a correction, "through the Spirit." (e) Finally, the impotence of all human strength in the spiritual conflict is briefly demonstrated by John when he says, "Whosoever is born of God cannot sin; for his seed remaineth in him:" (f) and in another place he adds the reason, that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (g)

XII. There is also a testimony cited from the law of Moses, which appears directly repugnant to our solution. For, after having published the law, he makes the following solemn declaration to the people: "This commandment, which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off: it is not in heaven: but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (h) If these expressions be understood merely of the precepts, I grant that they have much weight in the present argument. For although we might easily elude their force, by saying that they treat of the facility and promptitude, not of observance, but of knowledge, yet still perhaps they might leave some doubt. But the Apostle, in whose expositions there is no ambiguity, removes all our doubts, by affirming that Moses here spake of the doctrine of the gospel. (i) But if any one should obstinately contend, that Paul has violently perverted the passage from its genuine meaning, by applying it to the gospel, although his presumption could not be acquitted of impiety, yet there is enough to refute him, independently of the authority of the Apostle. For, if Moses spoke only of the precepts, he was deceiving the people with the vainest confidence. For would they not have precipitated themselves into ruin, if they had attempted the observance of the law in their own strength, as a thing of no difficulty? What, then, becomes of the very obvious facility with which the law may be observed, when there appears no access to it but over a fatal precipice? Where-

(c) 1 John v. 18.

(f) 1 John iii. 9.

(h) Deut. xxx. 11—14.

(d) John xvii. 15.

(g) 1 John v. 4.

(i) Rom. x. 8.

(e) 1 Peter i. 22.

fore nothing is more certain, than that Moses in these words comprehended the covenant of mercy, which he had promulgated together with the precepts of the law. For in a preceding verse he had taught that our hearts must be circumcised by God, in order that we may love him. (*k*) Therefore he placed this facility, of which he afterwards speaks, not in the strength of man, but in the assistance and protection of the Holy Spirit, who powerfully accomplishes his work in our infirmity. However, the passage is not to be understood simply of the precepts, but rather of the promises of the gospel, which are so far from maintaining an ability in us to obtain righteousness, that they prove us to be utterly destitute of it. Paul, considering the same, proves by this testimony that salvation is proposed to us in the gospel, not under that hard, difficult, and impossible condition, prescribed to us in the law, which pronounces it attainable only by those who have fulfilled all the commandments, but under a condition easily and readily to be performed. Therefore this testimony contributes nothing to support the liberty of the human will.

XIII. Some other passages also are frequently objected, which show that God sometimes tries men by withdrawing the assistance of his grace, and waits to see what course they will pursue; as in Hosea: "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face." (*l*) It would be ridiculous, they say, for the Lord to consider, whether Israel would seek his face, unless their minds were flexible, capable of inclining either way, according to their own pleasure; as if it were not very common for God, in the Prophets, to represent himself as despising and rejecting his people, till they should amend their lives. But what will our adversaries infer from such threats? If they maintain, that those who are deserted by God, are capable of converting themselves, they oppose the uniform declarations of Scripture. If they acknowledge that the grace of God is necessary to conversion, what is their controversy with us? But they will reply, that they concede its necessity in such a sense as to maintain that man still retains some power. How do they prove it? Certainly not from this or any similar passages. For it is one thing to depart from a man, to observe what he will do when forsaken and left to himself, and another to assist his little strength in proportion to his imbecility. What, then, it will be inquired, is implied in such forms of expression? I reply, that the import of them is just as if God had said, Since admonitions, exhortations, and reproofs, produce no good effect on this rebellious people, I will withdraw myself for a little while, and silently

(*k*) Deut. xxx. 6.(*l*) Hos. v. 15.

leave them to affliction. I will see whether, at some future period, after a series of calamities, they will remember me, and seek my face. The departure of the Lord signifies the removal of his word. His observing what men will do, signifies his concealing himself in silence, and exercising them for a season with various afflictions. He does both to humble us the more; for we should sooner be confounded than corrected with the scourges of adversity, unless he rendered us docile by his Spirit. Now, when the Lord, offended, and, as it were, wearied by our extreme obstinacy, leaves us for a time, by the removal of his word, in which he is accustomed to manifest his presence with us, and makes the experiment, what we shall do in his absence, — it is falsely inferred from this, that there is some power of free will, which he observes and proves; since he acts in this manner with no other design than to bring us to a sense and acknowledgment of our own nothingness.

XIV. They argue also from the manner of expression which is invariably observed, both in the Scripture and in the common conversation of mankind. For good actions are called our own, and we are said to perform what is holy and pleasing to the Lord, as well as to commit sins. But if sins be justly imputed to us, as proceeding from ourselves, certainly some share ought to be, for the same reason, assigned to us also in works of righteousness. For it would be absurd that we should be said to do those things, to the performance of which, being incapable of any exertion of our own, we were impelled by God, as so many stones. Wherefore, though we allow the grace of God the preëminence, yet these expressions indicate that our own endeavours hold at least the second place. If it were only alleged, that good works are called our own, I would reply, that the bread which we pray to God to give us, is called ours. What will they prove by this term, but that what otherwise by no means belongs to us, becomes ours through the benignity and gratuitous munificence of God? Therefore let them either ridicule the same absurdity in the Lord's prayer, or no longer esteem it ridiculous, that good works are denominated ours, in which we have no propriety but from the liberality of God. But there is rather more force in what follows; that the Scripture frequently affirms that we ourselves worship God, work righteousness, obey the law, and perform good works. These being the proper offices of the understanding and will, how could they justly be referred to the Spirit, and at the same time be attributed to us, if there were not some union of our exertions with the grace of God? We shall easily extricate ourselves from these objections, if we properly consider the manner in which the Spirit of the Lord operates in the saints. The similitude with which they try to

cast an odium on our sentiments, is quite foreign to the subject ; for who is so senseless as to suppose that there is no difference between impelling a man, and throwing a stone ? Nor does any such consequence follow from our doctrine. We rank among the natural powers of man, approving, rejecting ; willing, nilling ; attempting, resisting ; that is, a power to approve vanity, and to reject true excellence ; to will what is evil, to refuse what is good ; to attempt iniquity, and to resist righteousness. What concern has the Lord in this ? If it be his will to use this depravity as an instrument of his wrath, he directs and appoints it according to his pleasure, in order to execute his good work by means of a wicked hand. Shall we, then, compare a wicked man who is thus subservient to the Divine power, while he only studies to gratify his own corrupt inclination, to a stone which is hurled by an extrinsic impulse, and driven along without any motion, sense, or will of its own ? We perceive what a vast difference there is. But how does the Lord operate in good men, to whom the question principally relates ? When he erects his kingdom within them, he by his Spirit restrains their will, that it may not be hurried away by unsteady and violent passions, according to the propensity of nature ; that it may be inclined to holiness and righteousness, he bends, composes, forms, and directs it according to the rule of his own righteousness ; that it may not stagger or fall, he establishes and confirms it by the power of his Spirit. For which reason Augustine says, " You will reply to me, Then we are actuated ; we do not act. Yes, you both act and are actuated ; and you act well, when you are actuated by that which is good. The Spirit of God, who actuates you, assists those who act, and calls himself a helper, because you also perform something." In the first clause he inculcates that the agency of man is not destroyed by the influence of the Spirit ; because the will, which is guided to aspire to what is good, belongs to his nature. But the inference which he immediately subjoins, from the term *help*, that we also perform something, we should not understand in such a sense, as though he attributed any thing to us independently ; but in order to avoid encouraging us in indolence, he reconciles the Divine agency with ours in this way ; that to will is from nature, to will what is good is from grace. Therefore he had just before said, " Without the assistance of God, we shall be not only unable to conquer, but even to contend."

XV. Hence it appears that the grace of God, in the sense in which this word is used when we treat of regeneration, is the rule of the Spirit for directing and governing the human will. He cannot govern it unless he correct, reform, and reno-

vate it; whence we say that the commencement of regeneration is an abolition of what is from ourselves; nor unless he also excite, actuate, impel, support, and restrain it; whence we truly assert, that all the actions which proceed from this are entirely of the Spirit. At the same time, we fully admit the truth of what Augustine teaches, that the will is not destroyed by grace, but rather repaired; for these two things are perfectly consistent — that the human will may be said to be repaired, when, by the correction of its depravity and perverseness, it is directed according to the true standard of righteousness; and also that a new will may be said to be created in man, because the natural will is so vitiated and corrupted, that it needs to be formed entirely anew. Now, there is no reason why we may not justly be said to perform that which the Spirit of God performs in us, although our own will contributes nothing of itself, independently of his grace. And, therefore, we should remember what we have before cited from Augustine, that many persons labour in vain to find in the human will some good, properly its own. For whatever mixture men study to add from the power of free will to the grace of God, is only a corruption of it; just as if any one should dilute good wine with dirty or bitter water. But although whatever good there is in the human will, proceeds wholly from the internal influence of the Spirit, yet because we have a natural faculty of willing, we are, not without reason, said to do those things, the praise of which God justly claims to himself; first, because whatever God does in us, becomes ours by his benignity, provided we do not apprehend it to originate from ourselves; secondly, because the understanding is ours, the will is ours, and the effort is ours, which are all directed by him to that which is good.

XVI. The other testimonies, which they rake together from every quarter, will not much embarrass even persons of moderate capacities, who have well digested the answers already given. They quote this passage from Genesis: "Unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him;" (*m*) or, as they would translate the words, "Subject to thee shall be its appetite, and thou shalt rule over it;" which they explain to relate to sin, as though the Lord promised Cain, that the power of sin should not obtain dominion over his mind, if he would labour to overcome it. But we say that it is more agreeable to the tenor of the context, to understand it to be spoken concerning Abel. For the design of God in it is to prove the iniquity of that envy, which Cain had conceived against his brother. This he does by two reasons: first, that

it was in vain for him to meditate crimes in order to excel his brother in the sight of God, with whom no honour is given but to righteousness; secondly, that he was extremely ungrateful for the favours God had already conferred on him, since he could not bear his brother, even though subject to his authority. But that we may not appear to adopt this explanation, merely because the other is unfavourable to our tenets, let us admit that God spake concerning sin. If it be so, then what the Lord there declares, is either promised or commanded by him. If it be a command, we have already demonstrated that it affords no proof of the power of men: if it be a promise, where is the completion of the promise, seeing that Cain fell under the dominion of sin, over which he ought to have prevailed? They will say, that the promise includes a tacit condition, as though it had been declared to him that he should obtain the victory if he would contend for it; but who can admit these subterfuges? For if this dominion be referred to sin, the speech is doubtless a command, expressive, not of our ability, but of our duty, which remains our duty even though it exceed our ability. But the subject itself, and grammatical propriety, require a comparison to be made between Cain and Abel; in which the elder brother would not have been placed below the younger, if he had not degraded himself by his own wickedness.

XVII. They adduce also the testimony of the Apostle, who says, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy;" (n) whence they conclude, that there is something in the will and endeavour, which, though ineffectual of itself, is rendered successful by the assistance of the Divine mercy. But if they would soberly examine the subject there treated by Paul, they would not so inconsiderately pervert this passage. I know that they can allege the suffrages of Origen and Jerome in defence of their exposition; and in opposition to them, I could produce that of Augustine. But their opinions are of no importance to us if we can ascertain what was the meaning of Paul. He is there teaching, that salvation is provided for them alone, whom the Lord favours with his mercy; but that ruin and perdition await all those whom he has not chosen. He had shown, by the example of Pharaoh, the condition of the reprobate; and had confirmed the certainty of gratuitous election by the testimony of Moses: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." His conclusion is, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." If this be understood to imply that our will and endeavour are

(n) Rom. ix. 16.

not sufficient, because they are not equal to so great a work, Paul has expressed himself with great impropriety. Away, therefore, with these sophisms : "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth ;" therefore there is some willing and some running. For the meaning of Paul is more simple — It is neither our willing nor our running, which procures for us a way of salvation, but solely the mercy of God. For he expresses here the same sentiment as he does to Titus, when he says, "that the kindness and love of God towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy." (o) The very persons, who argue that Paul, in denying that it is of him that willeth or of him that runneth, implies that there is some willing and some running, would not allow me to use the same mode of reasoning, that we have done some good works, because Paul denies that we have obtained the favour of God by any works which we have done. But if they perceive a flaw in this argumentation, let them open their eyes, and they will perceive a similar fallacy in their own. For the argument on which Augustine rests the dispute is unanswerable : "If it be said, that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, merely because neither our willing nor our running is sufficient, it may, on the contrary, be retorted, that it is not of the mercy of God, because that does not act alone." (p) The latter position being absurd, Augustine justly concludes the meaning of this passage to be, that there is no good will in man, unless it be prepared by the Lord ; not but that we ought to will and to run, but because God works in us both the one and the other. With similar want of judgment, some pervert this declaration of Paul, "We are labourers together with God ;" (q) which, without doubt, is restricted solely to ministers, who are denominated "workers with him," not that they contribute any thing of themselves, but because God makes use of their agency, after he has qualified them and furnished them with the necessary talents.

XVIII. They produce a passage from Ecclesiasticus, which is well known to be a book of doubtful authority. But though we should not reject it, which, nevertheless, if we chose, we might justly do, what testimony does it afford in support of free will ? The writer says, that man, as soon as he was created, was left in the power of his own will ; that precepts were given to him, which if he kept, he should also be kept by them ; that he had life and death, good and evil, set before him ; and that whatever he desired, would be given him. (r) Let it be granted, that man at his creation was endowed with a power of choosing life or death. What if we reply, that he

(o) Tit. iii. 4, 5.
(p) Epist. 107, ad Vital.

(q) 1 Cor. iii. 9.
(r) Eccles. xv. 14.

has lost it? I certainly do not intend to contradict Solomon, who asserts that "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." (s) But man, by his degeneracy, having shipwrecked both himself and all his excellences, whatever is attributed to his primitive state, it does not immediately follow that it belongs to his vitiated and degenerated nature. Therefore I reply, not only to them, but also to Ecclesiasticus himself, whoever he be: If you design to teach man to seek within himself a power to attain salvation, your authority is not so great in our estimation as to obtain even the smallest degree of credit, in opposition to the undoubted word of God. But if you only aim to repress the malignity of the flesh, which vainly attempts to vindicate itself by transferring its crimes to God, and you therefore reply, that man was originally endued with rectitude, from which it is evident that he was the cause of his own ruin, I readily assent to it; provided we also agree in this, that through his own guilt he is now despoiled of those ornaments with which God invested him at the beginning; and so unite in confessing, that in his present situation he needs not an advocate, but a physician.

XIX. But there is nothing which our adversaries have more frequently in their mouths, than the parable of Christ concerning the traveller, who was left by robbers in the road half dead. (t) I know it is the common opinion of almost all writers, that the calamity of the human race is represented under the type of this traveller. Hence they argue, that man is not so mutilated by the violence of sin and the devil, but that he still retains some relics of his former excellences, since he is said to have been left only half dead; for what becomes of the remaining portion of life, unless there remain some rectitude both of reason and will? In the first place, what could they say, if I refused to admit their allegory? For there is no doubt but that this interpretation, invented by the fathers, is foreign to the genuine sense of our Lord's discourse. Allegories ought to be extended no further than they are supported by the authority of Scripture; for they are far from affording of themselves a sufficient foundation for any doctrines. Nor is there any want of arguments by which, if I chose, I could completely confute this erroneous notion; for the word of God does not leave man in the possession of a proportion of life, but teaches, that as far as respects happiness of life, he is wholly dead. Paul, when speaking of our redemption, says, not that we were recovered when half dead, but that "even when we were dead, we were raised up." He calls not on the half dead, but on those who are in the grave, sleeping the

(s) Eccles. vii. 29.

(t) Luke x. 30.

sleep of death, to receive the illumination of Christ. (*u*) And the Lord himself speaks in a similar manner, when he says, that "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." (*w*) With what face can they oppose a slight allusion against so many positive expressions? Yet let this allegory even be admitted as a clear testimony; what will it enable them to extort from us? Man, they will say, is but half dead; therefore he has some faculty remaining entire. I grant that he has a mind capable of understanding, though it attains not to heavenly and spiritual wisdom; he has some idea of virtue; he has some sense of the Deity, though he acquires not the true knowledge of God. But what is to be concluded from all this? It certainly does not disprove the assertion of Augustine, which has received the general approbation even of the schools, that man, since his fall, has been deprived of the gifts of grace on which salvation depends; but that the natural ones are corrupted and polluted. Let us hold this, then, as an undoubted truth, which no opposition can ever shake — that the mind of man is so completely alienated from the righteousness of God, that it conceives, desires, and undertakes every thing that is impious, perverse, base, impure, and flagitious; that his heart is so thoroughly infected by the poison of sin, that it cannot produce any thing but what is corrupt; and that if at any time men do any thing apparently good, yet the mind always remains involved in hypocrisy and fallacious obliquity, and the heart enslaved by its inward perverseness.

CHAPTER VI.

REDEMPTION FOR LOST MAN TO BE SOUGHT IN CHRIST.

THE whole human race having perished in the person of Adam, our original excellence and dignity, which we have noticed, so far from being advantageous to us, only involves us in greater ignominy, till God, who does not acknowledge the pollution and corruption of man by sin to be his work, appears as a Redeemer in the person of his only begotten Son. Therefore, since we are fallen from life into death, all that knowledge of God as a Creator, of which we have been treating, would be useless, unless it were succeeded by faith exhibiting God to

(*u*) Eph. ii. 5; v. 14.

(*w*) John v. 25.

us as a Father in Christ. This, indeed, was the genuine order of nature, that the fabric of the world should be a school in which we might learn piety, and thence be conducted to eternal life and perfect felicity. But since the fall, whithersoever we turn our eyes, the curse of God meets us on every side, which, whilst it seizes innocent creatures and involves them in our guilt, must necessarily overwhelm our souls with despair. For though God is pleased still to manifest his paternal kindness to us in various ways, yet we cannot, from a contemplation of the world, conclude that he is our Father, when our conscience disturbs us within, and convinces us that our sins afford a just reason why God should abandon us, and no longer esteem us as his children. We are also chargeable with stupidity and ingratitude; for our minds, being blinded, do not perceive the truth; and all our senses being corrupted, we wickedly defraud God of his glory. We must therefore subscribe to the declaration of Paul: "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (x) What he denominates the wisdom of God, is this magnificent theatre of heaven and earth, which is replete with innumerable miracles, and from the contemplation of which we ought wisely to acquire the knowledge of God. But because we have made so little improvement in this way, he recalls us to the faith of Christ, which is despised by unbelievers on account of its apparent folly. Wherefore, though the preaching of the cross is not agreeable to human reason, we ought, nevertheless, to embrace it with all humility, if we desire to return to God our Creator, from whom we have been alienated, and to have him reassume the character of our Father. Since the fall of the first man, no knowledge of God, without the Mediator, has been available to salvation. For Christ speaks not of his own time only, but comprehends all ages, when he says that "this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (y) And this aggravates the stupidity of those who set open the gate of heaven to all unbelievers and profane persons, without the grace of Christ, whom the Scripture universally represents as the only door of entrance into salvation. But if any man would restrict this declaration of Christ to the period of the first promulgation of the gospel, we are prepared with a refutation. For it has been a common opinion, in all ages and nations, that those who are alienated from God, and pronounced accursed, and children of wrath, cannot please him without a reconciliation. Here add the answer of Christ to the woman of Samaria: "Ye

(x) 1 Cor. i. 21.

(y) John xvii. 3.

worship ye know not what : we know what we worship ; for salvation is of the Jews." (z) In these words he at once condemns all the religions of the Gentiles as false, and assigns a reason for it ; because under the law the Redeemer was promised only to the chosen people ; whence it follows that no worship has ever been acceptable to God, unless it had respect to Christ. Hence also Paul affirms that all the Gentiles were without God, and destitute of the hope of life. (a) Now, as John teaches us that life was from the beginning in Christ, and that the whole world are fallen from it, (b) it is necessary to return to that fountain ; and therefore Christ asserts himself to be the life, as he is the author of the propitiation. And, indeed, the celestial inheritance belongs exclusively to the children of God. But it is very unreasonable that they should be considered in the place and order of his children, who have not been engrafted into the body of his only begotten Son. And John plainly declares that " they who believe in his name become the sons of God." (c) But as it is not my design in this place to treat professedly of faith in Christ, these cursory hints shall at present suffice.

II. Therefore God never showed himself propitious to his ancient people, nor afforded them any hope of his favour, without a Mediator. I forbear to speak of the legal sacrifices, by which the faithful were plainly and publicly instructed that salvation was to be sought solely in that expiation, which has been accomplished by Christ alone. I only assert, that the happiness of the Church has always been founded on the person of Christ. For though God comprehended in his covenant all the posterity of Abraham, yet Paul judiciously reasons, that Christ is in reality that Seed in whom all the nations were to be blessed ; (d) since we know that the natural descendants of that patriarch were not reckoned as his seed. For, to say nothing of Ishmael and others, what was the cause, that of the two sons of Isaac, the twin-brothers Esau and Jacob, even when they were yet unborn, one should be chosen and the other rejected ? How came it to pass that the first-born was rejected, and that the younger obtained his birthright ? How came the majority of the people to be disinherited ? It is evident, therefore, that the seed of Abraham is reckoned principally in one person, and that the promised salvation was not manifested till the coming of Christ, whose office it is to collect what had been scattered abroad. The first adoption, therefore, of the chosen people, depended on the grace of the Mediator ; which, though it is not so plainly expressed by

(z) John iv. 22.

(a) Ephes. ii. 12.

(b) John i. 4.

(c) John i. 12.

(d) Gal. iii. 16.

Moses, yet appears to have been generally well known to all the pious. For before the appointment of any king in the nation, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, speaking of the felicity of the faithful, thus expressed herself in her song: "The Lord shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." (e) Her meaning in these words is, that God will bless his Church. And to this agrees the oracle, which is soon after introduced: "I will raise me up a faithful priest, and he shall walk before mine anointed." And there is no doubt that it was the design of the heavenly Father to exhibit in David and his posterity a lively image of Christ. With a design to exhort the pious, therefore, to the fear of God, he enjoins them to "kiss the Son;" (f) which agrees with this declaration of the gospel: "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father." (g) Therefore, though the kingdom was weakened by the revolt of the ten tribes, yet the covenant, which God had made with David and his successors, could not but stand, as he also declared by the Prophets: "I will not rend away all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." (h) This is repeated again and again. It is also expressly added, "I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever." (i) At a little distance of time it is said, "For David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem." (k) Even when the state was come to the verge of ruin, it was again said, "The Lord would not destroy Judah, for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a light, and to his children." (l) The sum of the whole is this — that David alone was chosen, to the rejection of all others, as the perpetual object of the Divine favour; as it is said, in another place, "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh; he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim; but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion, which he loved. He chose David also his servant, to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance." (m) Finally, it pleased God to preserve his Church in such a way, that its security and salvation should depend on that head. David therefore exclaims, "The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed;" (n) and immediately adds this petition: "Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance;" signifying that the state of the Church is inseparably connected with the government of Christ. In the same sense he elsewhere says, "Save, Lord; let the king hear us when

(e) 1 Sam. ii. 10. (f) Psalm ii. 12. (g) John v. 24.

(h) 1 Kings xi. 13. (i) 1 Kings xi. 39.

(k) 1 Kings xv. 4. (l) 2 Kings viii. 19. (m) Psalm lxxviii. 60, 67, 68, 70, 71.

(n) Psalm xxviii. 8.

we call." (o) In these words he clearly teaches us that the faithful resort to God for assistance, with no other confidence than because they are sheltered under the protection of the king. This is to be inferred from another psalm: "Save, O Lord! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord;" (p) where it is sufficiently evident that the faithful are invited to Christ, that they may hope to be saved by the power of God. The same thing is alluded to in another prayer, where the whole Church implores the mercy of God: "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself." (q) For though the author of the psalm deplors the dissipation of all the people, yet he ardently prays for their restoration in their head alone. But when Jeremiah, after the people were driven into exile, the land laid waste, and all things apparently ruined, bewails the miseries of the Church, he principally laments that by the subversion of the kingdom, the hope of the faithful was cut off. "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen." (r) Hence it is sufficiently evident, that since God cannot be propitious to mankind but through the Mediator, Christ was always exhibited to the holy fathers under the law, as the object to which they should direct their faith.

III. Now, when consolation is promised in affliction, but especially when the deliverance of the Church is described, the standard of confidence and hope is erected in Christ alone. "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed," (s) says Habakkuk. And whenever the Prophets mention the restoration of the Church, they recall the people to the promise given to David concerning the perpetuity of his kingdom. Nor is this to be wondered at; for otherwise there would be no stability in the covenant. To this refers the memorable answer of Isaiah. For when he saw that his declaration concerning the raising of the siege, and the present deliverance of Jerusalem, was rejected by that unbelieving king, Ahaz, he makes rather an abrupt transition to the Messiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son;" (t) indirectly suggesting, that although the king and the people, in their perverseness, rejected the promise which had been given them, as though they would purposely labour to invalidate the truth of God, yet that his covenant would not be frustrated, but that the Redeemer should come at his appointed time. Finally, all the Prophets, in order to display

(o) Psalm xx. 9.

(p) Psalm cxviii. 25, 26.

(q) Psalm lxxx. 17.

(r) Lam. iv. 20.

(s) Hab. iii. 13.

(t) Isaiah vii. 14.

the Divine mercy, were constantly careful to exhibit to view that kingdom of David, from which redemption and eternal salvation were to proceed. Thus Isaiah: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people;" (v) because in desperate circumstances the faithful could have no hope, any otherwise than by his interposition as a witness, that God would be merciful to them. Thus also Jeremiah, to comfort them who were in despair, says, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely." (w) And Ezekiel: "I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; and I will make with them a covenant of peace." (x) Again, in another place, having treated of their incredible renovation, he says, "David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one Shepherd. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them." (y) I select a few passages out of many, because I only wish to apprise the reader, that the hope of the pious has never been placed any where but in Christ. All the other Prophets also uniformly speak the same language. As Hosea: "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head." (z) And in a subsequent chapter he is still more explicit: "The children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king." (a) Micah also, discoursing on the return of the people, expressly declares, "their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them." (b) Thus Amos, intending to predict the restoration of the people, says, "In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins." (c) This implies that the only standard of salvation was the restoration of the regal dignity in the family of David, which was accomplished in Christ. Zechariah, therefore, living nearer to the time of the manifestation of Christ, more openly exclaims, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation." (d) This corresponds with a passage from a psalm, already cited: "The Lord is the saving strength of his anointed. Save thy people;" (e) where salvation is extended from the head to the whole body.

(v) Isaiah lv. 3.

(w) Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

(x) Ezek. xxxiv. 23—25.

(y) Ezek. xxxvii. 24, 26.

(z) Hos. i. 11.

(a) Hos. iii. 5.

(b) Mic. ii. 13.

(c) Amos ix. 11.

(d) Zech. ix. 9.

(e) Psalm xxviii. 8, 9.

IV. It was the will of God that the Jews should be instructed by these prophecies, so that they might direct their eyes to Christ whenever they wanted deliverance. Nor, indeed, notwithstanding their shameful degeneracy, could the memory of this general principle ever be obliterated — that God would be the deliverer of the Church by the hand of Christ, according to his promise to David; and that in this manner the covenant of grace, in which God had adopted his elect, would at length be confirmed. Hence it came to pass, that when Christ, a little before his death, entered into Jerusalem, that song was heard from the mouths of children, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” (*f*) For the subject of their song appears to have been derived from a sentiment generally received and avowed by the people, that there remained to them no other pledge of the mercy of God, but in the advent of the Redeemer. For this reason Christ commands his disciples to believe in him, that they may distinctly and perfectly believe in God: “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” (*g*) For though, strictly speaking, faith ascends from Christ to the Father, yet he suggests, that though it were even fixed on God, yet it would gradually decline, unless he interposed, to preserve its stability. The majesty of God is otherwise far above the reach of mortals, who are like worms crawling upon the earth. Wherefore, though I do not reject that common observation that God is the object of faith, yet I consider it as requiring some correction. For it is not without reason that Christ is called “the image of the invisible God;” (*h*) but by this appellation we are reminded, that unless God reveal himself to us in Christ, we cannot have that knowledge of him which is necessary to salvation. For although among the Jews the scribes had by false glosses obscured the declarations of the Prophets concerning the Redeemer, yet Christ assumed it for granted, as if allowed by common consent, that there was no other remedy for the confusion into which the Jews had fallen, nor any other mode of deliverance for the Church, but the exhibition of the Mediator. There was not, indeed, such a general knowledge as there ought to have been, of the principle taught by Paul, that “Christ is the end of the law;” (*i*) but the truth and certainty of this evidently appears both from the law itself and from the Prophets. I am not yet treating of faith; there will be a more suitable place for that subject in another part of the work. Only let this be well fixed in the mind of the reader; that the first step to piety is to know that God is our Father, to protect, govern, and support us till he gathers us into the eternal inheritance of his

(*f*) Matt. xxi. 9.(*g*) John xiv. 1.(*h*) Col. i. 15.(*i*) Rom. x. 4.

kingdom ; that hence it is plain, as we have before asserted, that there can be no saving knowledge of God without Christ ; and consequently that from the beginning of the world he has always been manifested to all the elect, that they might look to him, and repose all their confidence in him. In this sense Irenæus says that the Father, who is infinite in himself, becomes finite in the Son ; because he has accommodated himself to our capacity, that he may not overwhelm our minds with the infinity of his glory. (*k*) And fanatics, not considering this, pervert a useful observation into an impious reverie, as though there were in Christ merely a portion of Deity, an emanation from the infinite perfection ; whereas the sole meaning of that writer is, that God is apprehended in Christ, and in him alone. The assertion of John has been verified in all ages, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." (*l*) For though many in ancient times gloried in being worshippers of the Supreme Deity, the Creator of heaven and earth, yet, because they had no Mediator, it was impossible for them to have any real acquaintance with the mercy of God, or persuasion that he was their Father. Therefore, as they did not hold the head, that is, Christ, all their knowledge of God was obscure and unsettled ; whence it came to pass, that degenerating at length into gross and vile superstitions, they betrayed their ignorance, like the Turks in modern times ; who, though they boast of having the Creator of heaven and earth for their God, yet only substitute an idol instead of the true God as long as they remain enemies to Christ.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAW GIVEN, NOT TO CONFINE THE ANCIENT PEOPLE TO ITSELF, BUT TO ENCOURAGE THEIR HOPE OF SALVATION IN CHRIST, TILL THE TIME OF HIS COMING.

FROM the deduction we have made, it may easily be inferred, that the law was superadded about four hundred years after the death of Abraham, not to draw away the attention of the chosen people from Christ, but rather to keep their minds waiting for his advent, to inflame their desires and confirm their expectations, that they might not be discouraged by so

(*k*) Lib. 4, c. 8.

(*l*) 1 John ii. 23.

long a delay. By the word *law*, I intend, not only the decalogue, which prescribes the rule of a pious and righteous life, but the form of religion delivered from God by the hands of Moses. For Moses was not made a legislator to abolish the blessing promised to the seed of Abraham; on the contrary, we see him on every occasion reminding the Jews of that gracious covenant made with their fathers, to which they were heirs; as though the object of his mission had been to renew it. It was very clearly manifested in the ceremonies. For what could be more vain or frivolous than for men to offer the fetid stench arising from the fat of cattle, in order to reconcile themselves to God? or to resort to any aspersion of water or of blood, to cleanse themselves from pollution? In short, the whole legal worship, if it be considered in itself, and contain no shadows and figures of correspondent truths, will appear perfectly ridiculous. Wherefore it is not without reason, that both in the speech of Stephen and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that passage is so carefully stated, in which God commands Moses to make all things pertaining to the tabernacle "according to the pattern showed to him in the mount." (*m*) For unless there had been some spiritual design, to which they were directed, the Jews would have laboured to no purpose in these observances, as the Gentiles did in their mummeries. Profane men, who have never seriously devoted themselves to the pursuit of piety, have not patience to hear of such various rites: they not only wonder why God should weary his ancient people with such a mass of ceremonies, but they even despise and deride them as puerile and ludicrous. This arises from inattention to the end of the legal figures, from which if those figures be separated, they must be condemned as vain and useless. But the "pattern," which is mentioned, shows that God commanded the sacrifices, not with a design to occupy his worshippers in terrestrial exercises, but rather that he might elevate their minds to sublimer objects. This may be likewise evinced by his nature; for as he is a Spirit, he is pleased with none but spiritual worship. Testimonies of this truth may be found in the numerous passages of the Prophets, in which they reprove the stupidity of the Jews for supposing that sacrifices possess any real value in the sight of God. Do they mean to derogate from the law? Not at all; but being true interpreters of it, they designed by this method to direct the eyes of the people to that point from which the multitude were wandering. Now, from the grace offered to the Jews, it is inferred as a certain truth, that the law was not irrespective of Christ; for Moses mentioned to

(*m*) Acts vii. 44. Heb. viii. 5. Ex. xxv. 40.

them this end of their adoption, that they might "be unto God a kingdom of priests;" (n) which could not be attained without a greater and more excellent reconciliation than could arise from the blood of beasts. For what is more improbable than that the sons of Adam, who by hereditary contagion are all born the slaves of sin, should be exalted to regal dignity, and thus become partakers of the glory of God, unless such an eminent blessing proceeded from some other source than themselves? How also could the right of the priesthood remain among them, the pollution of whose crimes rendered them abominable to God, unless they had been consecrated in a holy head? Wherefore Peter makes a beautiful application of this observation of Moses, suggesting that the plenitude of that grace, of which the Jews enjoyed a taste under the law, is exhibited in Christ. "Ye are," says he, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." (o) This application of the words tends to show, that they, to whom Christ has appeared under the gospel, have obtained more than their forefathers; because they are all invested with sacerdotal and regal honours, that in a dependence on their Mediator they may venture to come boldly into the presence of God.

II. And here it must be remarked, by the way, that the kingdom, which at length was erected in the family of David, is a part of the law, and comprised under the ministry of Moses; whence it follows, that both in the posterity of David, and in the whole Levitical tribe, as in a twofold mirror, Christ was exhibited to the view of his ancient people. For, as I have just observed, it was otherwise impossible that in the Divine view they should be kings and priests, who were the slaves of sin and death, and polluted by their own corruptions. Hence appears the truth of the assertion of Paul, that the Jews were subject, as it were, to the authority of a school-master, till the advent of that seed, for whose sake the promise was given. (p) For Christ being not yet familiarly discovered, they were like children, whose imbecility could not yet bear the full knowledge of heavenly things. But how they were led to Christ by the ceremonies, has been already stated, and may be better learned from the testimonies of the Prophets. For although they were obliged every day to approach God with new sacrifices, in order to appease him, yet Isaiah promises them the expiation of all their transgressions by a single sacrifice, (q) which is confirmed by Daniel. (r) The priests chosen from the tribe of Levi, used to enter into the sanctuary; but concerning that one priest it was once said, that he was

(n) Exod. xix. 6.

(o) 1 Peter ii. 9.

(p) Gal. iii. 24.

(q) Isaiah liii. 5, &c.

(r) Dan. ix. 26, &c.

divinely chosen with an oath, to be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (s) There was, then, an unction of visible oil; but Daniel, from his vision, foretells an unction of a different kind. But not to insist on many proofs, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, from the fourth chapter to the eleventh, demonstrates in a manner sufficiently copious and clear, that, irrespective of Christ, all the ceremonies of the law are worthless and vain. And in regard to the decalogue, we should attend to the declaration of Paul, that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" (t) and also that Christ is "the Spirit," who gives "life" to the otherwise dead letter. (v) For in the former passage he signifies that righteousness is taught in vain by the precepts, till Christ bestows it both by a gratuitous imputation, and by the Spirit of regeneration. Wherefore he justly denominates Christ the completion or end of the law; for we should derive no benefit from a knowledge of what God requires of us, unless we were succoured by Christ when labouring and oppressed under its yoke and intolerable burden. In another place, he states that "the law was added because of transgressions;" (w) that is, to humble men, by convicting them of being the causes of their own condemnation. Now, this being the true and only preparation for seeking Christ, the various declarations which he makes are in perfect unison with each other. But as he was then engaged in a controversy with erroneous teachers, who pretended that we merit righteousness by the works of the law, — in order to refute their error, he was sometimes obliged to use the term *law* in a more restricted sense, as merely preceptive, although it was otherwise connected with the covenant of gratuitous adoption.

III. But it is worthy of a little inquiry, how we are rendered more inexcusable by the instructions of the moral law, in order that a sense of our guilt may excite us to supplicate for pardon. If it be true that the law displays a perfection of righteousness, it also follows that the complete observation of it, is in the sight of God a perfect righteousness, in which a man would be esteemed and reputed righteous at the tribunal of heaven. Wherefore Moses, when he had promulgated the law, hesitated not to "call heaven and earth to record" (x) that he had proposed to the Israelites life and death, good and evil. Nor can we deny that the reward of eternal life awaits a righteous obedience to the law, according to the Divine promise. But, on the other hand, it is proper to examine whether we perform that obedience, the merit of which can warrant

(s) Psalm cx. 4.

(w) Gal. iii. 19.

(t) Rom. x. 4.

(z) Deut. xxx. 15, 19.

(v) 2 Cor. iii. 17.

our confident expectation of that reward. For how unimportant is it, to discover that the reward of eternal life depends on the observance of the law, unless we also ascertain whether it be possible for us to arrive at eternal life in that way! But in this point the weakness of the law is manifest. For as none of us are found to observe the law, we are excluded from the promises of life, and fall entirely under the curse. I am now showing, not only what does happen, but what necessarily must happen. For the doctrine of the law being far above human ability, man may view the promises, indeed, from a distance, but cannot gather any fruit from them. It only remains for him, from their goodness to form a truer estimate of his own misery, while he reflects that all hope of salvation is cut off, and that he is in imminent danger of death. On the other hand, we are urged with terrible sanctions, which bind, not a few of us, but every individual of mankind; they urge, I say, and pursue us with inexorable rigour, so that in the law we see nothing but present death.

IV. Therefore, if we direct our views exclusively to the law, the effects upon our minds will only be despondency, confusion, and despair, since it condemns and curses us all, and keeps us far from that blessedness which it proposes to them who observe it. Does the Lord, then, you will say, in this case do nothing but mock us? For how little does it differ from mockery, to exhibit a hope of felicity, to invite and exhort to it, to declare that it is ready for our reception, whilst the way to it is closed and inaccessible! I reply, although the promises of the law, being conditional, depend on a perfect obedience to the law, which can nowhere be found, yet they have not been given in vain. For when we have learned that they will be vain and inefficacious to us, unless God embrace us with his gratuitous goodness, without any regard to our works, and unless we have also embraced by faith that goodness, as exhibited to us in the gospel, — then these promises are not without their use, even with the condition annexed to them. For then he gratuitously confers every thing upon us, so that he adds this also to the number of his favours, that not rejecting our imperfect obedience, but pardoning its deficiencies, he gives us to enjoy the benefit of the legal promises, just as if we had fulfilled the condition ourselves. But as we shall more fully discuss this question when we treat of the justification of faith, we shall pursue it no further at present.

V. Our assertion, respecting the impossibility of observing the law, must be briefly explained and proved; for it is generally esteemed a very absurd sentiment, so that Jerome has not scrupled to denounce it as accursed. What was the opinion of

Jerome, I regard not ; let us inquire what is truth. I shall not here enter into a long discussion of the various species of possibility ; I call that impossible which has never happened yet, and which is prevented by the ordination and decree of God from ever happening in future. If we inquire from the remotest period of antiquity, I assert that there never has existed a saint, who, surrounded with a body of death, could attain to such a degree of love, as to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind ; and, moreover, that there never has been one, who was not the subject of some inordinate desire. Who can deny this ? I know, indeed, what sort of saints the folly of superstition imagines to itself, such as almost excel even the angels of heaven in purity ; but such an imagination is repugnant both to Scripture and to the dictates of experience. I assert also that no man, who shall exist in future, will reach the standard of true perfection, unless released from the burden of the body. This is established by clear testimonies of Scripture : Solomon says, "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." (y) David ; "In thy sight shall no man living be justified." (z) Job in many passages affirms the same thing ; (a) but Paul most plainly of all, that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." (b) Nor does he prove, that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse," by any other reason but because "it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them ;" (c) evidently suggesting, and even taking it for granted, that no one can continue in them. Now, whatever is predicted in the Scriptures, must be considered as perpetual, and even as necessary. With a similar fallacy Augustine used to be teased by the Pelagians, who maintained that it is an injury to God, to say that he commands more than the faithful through his grace are able to perform. To avoid their cavil, he admitted that the Lord might, if he chose, exalt a mortal man to the purity of angels ; but that he neither had ever done it, nor would ever do it, because he had declared otherwise in the Scriptures. (d) This I do not deny ; but I add that it is absurd to dispute concerning the power of God, in opposition to his veracity ; and that, therefore, it affords no room for cavilling, when any one maintains that to be impossible, which the Scriptures declare will never happen. But if the dispute be about the term, the Lord, in reply to an inquiry of his disciples, "Who, then, can be saved ?" says, "With men this is impossible ; but with God all things are

(y) Eccles. vii. 20. (z) Psalm cxliii. 2. (a) Job iv. 17 ; ix. 2 ; xv. 14 ; xxv. 4.
(b) Gal. v. 17. (c) Gal. iii. 10. (d) Lib. de Nat. et Grät.

possible." (e) Augustine contends, with a very powerful argument, that in this flesh we never render to God the legitimate love which we owe to him. "Love," says he, "is an effect of knowledge, so that no man can perfectly love God, who has not first a complete knowledge of his goodness. During our pilgrimage in this world, we see through an obscure medium; the consequence of this, then, is, that our love is imperfect." It ought, therefore, to be admitted without controversy, that it is impossible in this carnal state to fulfil the law, if we consider the impotence of our nature, as will elsewhere be proved also from Paul. (f)

VI. But for the better elucidation of the subject, let us state, in a compendious order, the office and use of what is called the moral law. It is contained, as far as I understand it, in these three points. The first is, that while it discovers the righteousness of God, that is, the only righteousness which is acceptable to God, it warns every one of his own unrighteousness, places it beyond all doubt, convicts, and condemns him. For it is necessary that man, blinded and inebriated with self-love, should thus be driven into a knowledge of himself, and a confession of his own imbecility and impurity. Since, unless his vanity be evidently reprov'd, he is inflated with a foolish confidence in his strength, and can never be brought to perceive its feebleness as long as he measures it by the rule of his own fancy. But as soon as he begins to compare it to the difficulty of the law, he finds his insolence and pride immediately abate. For how great soever his preconceived opinion of it, he perceives it immediately pant under so heavy a load, and then totter, and at length fall. Thus, being instructed under the tuition of the law, he lays aside that arrogance with which he was previously blinded. He must also be cured of the other disease, of pride, with which, we have observed, he is afflicted. As long as he is permitted to stand in his own judgment, he substitutes hypocrisy instead of righteousness; contented with which, he rises up with I know not what pretended righteousnesses, in opposition to the grace of God. But when he is constrained to examine his life according to the rules of the law, he no longer presumes on his counterfeit righteousness, but perceives that he is at an infinite distance from holiness; and also that he abounds with innumerable vices, from which he before supposed himself to be pure. For the evils of concupiscence are concealed in such deep and intricate recesses, as easily to elude the view of man. And it is not without cause that the Apostle says, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet;" (g) because, unless it be stripped of its

(e) Matt. xix. 25, 26.

(f) Rom. viii. 3, &c.

(g) Rom. vii. 7.

disguises, and brought to light by the law, it destroys the miserable man in so secret a manner, that he does not perceive its fatal dart.

VII. Thus the law is like a mirror, in which we behold, first, our impotence; secondly, our iniquity, which proceeds from it; and lastly, the consequence of both, our obnoxiousness to the curse; just as a mirror represents to us the spots on our face. For when a man is destitute of power to practise righteousness, he must necessarily fall into the habits of sin. And sin is immediately followed by the curse. Therefore the greater the transgression of which the law convicts us, the more severe is the judgment with which it condemns us. This appears from the observation of the Apostle, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." (*h*) For he there speaks only of the first office of the law, which is experienced in sinners not yet regenerated. The same sentiment is conveyed in the following passages: that "the law entered, that the offence might abound;" (*i*) and that it is therefore "the ministration of death, which worketh wrath and slayeth." (*k*) For iniquity undoubtedly increases more and more, in proportion to the clearness of that sense of sin which strikes the conscience; because to transgression of the law, there is then added contumacy against the lawgiver. It remains, therefore, that the law arm the Divine wrath against the sinner; for of itself it can only accuse, condemn, and destroy. And, as Augustine says, if we have not the Spirit of grace, the law serves only to convict and slay us. But this assertion neither reflects dishonour on the law, nor at all derogates from its excellence. Certainly, if our will were wholly conformed to the law, and disposed to obey it, the mere knowledge of it would evidently be sufficient to salvation. But since our carnal and corrupt nature is in a state of hostility against the spirituality of the Divine law, and not amended by its discipline, it follows that the law, which was given for salvation, if it could have found adequate attention, becomes an occasion of sin and death. For since we are all convicted of having transgressed it, the more clearly it displays the righteousness of God, so, on the contrary, the more it detects our iniquity, and the more certainly it confirms the reward of life and salvation reserved for the righteous, so much the more certain it makes the perdition of the wicked. These expressions, therefore, are so far from being dishonourable to the law, that they serve more illustriously to recommend the Divine goodness. For hence it really appears, that our iniquity and depravity prevent us from enjoying that blessed life which is revealed to all men in the law. Hence the grace of God, which

(*h*) Rom. iii. 20.(*i*) Rom. v. 20.(*k*) 2 Cor. iii. 7. Rom. iv. 15.

succours us without the assistance of the law, is rendered sweeter ; and his mercy, which confers it on us, more amiable ; from which we learn that he is never wearied with repeating his blessings and loading us with new favours.

VIII. But though the iniquity and condemnation of us all are confirmed by the testimony of the law, this is not done (at least if we properly profit by it) in order to make us sink into despair, and fall over the precipice of despondency. It is true that the wicked are thus confounded by it, but this is occasioned by the obstinacy of their hearts. With the children of God, its instructions must terminate in a different manner. The Apostle indeed declares that we are all condemned by the sentence of the law, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (l) Yet the same Apostle elsewhere informs us, that "God hath concluded them all in unbelief," not that he might destroy or suffer all to perish, but "that he might have mercy upon all ;" (m) that is, that leaving their foolish opinion of their own strength, they may know that they stand and are supported only by the power of God ; that being naked and destitute, they may resort for assistance to his mercy, recline themselves wholly upon it, hide themselves entirely in it, and embrace it alone for righteousness and merits, since it is offered in Christ to all who with true faith implore it and expect it. For in the precepts of the law, God appears only, on the one hand, as the rewarder of perfect righteousness, of which we are all destitute ; and on the other, as the severe judge of transgressions. But in Christ, his face shines with a plenitude of grace and lenity, even towards miserable and unworthy sinners.

IX. Of making use of the law to implore the assistance of God, Augustine frequently treats ; as when he writes to Hilary : "The law gives commands, in order that, endeavouring to perform them, and being wearied through our infirmity under the law, we may learn to pray for the assistance of grace." Also to Asellius : "The utility of the law is to convince man of his own infirmity, and to compel him to pray for the gracious remedy provided in Christ." Also to Innocentius Romanus : "The law commands : grace furnishes strength for the performance." Again, to Valentine : "God commands what we cannot perform, that we may know for what blessings we ought to supplicate him." Again : "The law was given to convict you ; that being convicted you might fear, that fearing you might pray for pardon, and not presume on your own strength." Again : "The end for which the law was given, was to diminish that which was great, to demonstrate that you

(l) Rom. iii. 19.

(m) Rom. xi. 32.

have of yourself no ability to work righteousness, that thus, being poor, indigent, and destitute, you might have recourse to grace for relief." Afterwards he addresses himself to God : " Thus do, O Lord ! thus do, O merciful Lord ! command that which cannot be performed : even command that which cannot be performed without thy grace : that when men cannot perform it in their own strength, every mouth may be stopped, and no man appear great in his own estimation. Let all men be mean, and let all the world be proved guilty before God." But I am not wise in collecting so many testimonies, when this holy man has written a treatise expressly on this subject, which he has entitled *De Spiritu et Littera*, On the Spirit and Letter. The second use of the law he does not so clearly describe, either because he knew that it depends on the first, or because he did not so fully understand it, or because he wanted words to explain it with distinctness and perspicuity adequate to his ideas of it. Yet this first office of the law is not confined to the pious, but extends also to the reprobate. For though they do not, with the children of God, advance so far as, after the mortification of the flesh, to be renewed, and to flourish again in the inner man, but, confounded with the first horrors of conscience, remain in despair, yet they contribute to manifest the equity of the Divine judgment, by their consciences being agitated with such violent emotions. For they are always desirous of cavilling against the judgment of God ; but now, while it is not yet manifested, they are, nevertheless, so confounded with the testimony of the law and of their own conscience, that they betray in themselves what they have deserved.

X. The second office of the law is, to cause those who, unless constrained, feel no concern for justice and rectitude, when they hear its terrible sanctions, to be at least restrained by a fear of its penalties. And they are restrained, not because it internally influences or affects their minds, but because, being chained, as it were, they refrain from external acts, and repress their depravity within them, which otherwise they would have wantonly discharged. This makes them neither better nor more righteous in the Divine view. For although, being prevented either by fear or by shame, they dare not execute what their minds have contrived, nor openly discover the fury of their passions, yet their hearts are not disposed to fear and obey God ; and the more they restrain themselves, the more violently they are inflamed within ; they ferment, they boil, ready to break out into any external acts, if they were not prevented by this dread of the law. And not only so, they also inveterately hate the law itself, and execrate God the law-giver, so that, if they could, they would wish to annihilate him whom they cannot bear, either in commanding that which is

right, or in punishing the despisers of his majesty. In some, indeed, this state of mind is more evident, in others more concealed; but it is really the case of all who are yet unregenerate, that they are induced to attend to the law, not by a voluntary submission, but with reluctance and resistance, only by the violence of fear. But yet this constrained and extorted righteousness is necessary to the community, whose public tranquillity is provided for by God in this instance, while he prevents all things being involved in confusion, which would certainly be the case, if all men were permitted to pursue their own inclinations. Moreover, it is useful even to the children of God, to be exercised by its discipline before their vocation, while they are destitute of the Spirit of sanctification, and are absorbed in carnal folly. For when the dread of Divine vengeance restrains them even from external licentiousness, although, their minds being not yet subdued, they make but a slow progress at present, yet they are in some measure accustomed to bear the yoke of righteousness; so that when they are called, they may not be entirely unaccustomed to its discipline, as a thing altogether unknown. To this office of the law the Apostle appears particularly to have referred, when he says, "that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient; for the ungodly and for sinners; for unholy and profane; for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers; for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." (n) For he here signifies that it restrains the violence of the carnal desires, which would otherwise indulge themselves in the most unbounded licentiousness.

XI. But we may apply to both what he elsewhere asserts, that to the Jews "the law was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ;" (o) for there are two kinds of persons who are led to Christ by its discipline. Some, whom we mentioned in the first place, from too much confidence either in their own strength or in their own righteousness, are unfit to receive the grace of Christ, till they have first been stripped of every thing. The law, therefore, reduces them to humility by a knowledge of their own misery, that thus they may be prepared to pray for that of which they before supposed themselves not destitute. Others need a bridle to restrain them, lest they abandon themselves to carnal licentiousness, to such a degree as wholly to depart from all practice of righteousness. For where the Spirit does not yet reign, there is sometimes such a violent ebullition of the passions, as to occasion great danger of the soul that is under their influence being swallowed up in forget-

(n) 1 Tim. i. 9, 10.

(o) Gal. iii. 24.

fulness and contempt of God; which would certainly be the case, if the Lord did not provide this remedy against it. Those, therefore, whom he has destined to the inheritance of his kingdom, if he do not immediately regenerate them, he keeps under fear by the works of the law till the time of his visitation; not that chaste and pure fear which ought to be felt by his children, but a fear which is, nevertheless, useful to train them, according to their capacity, to true piety. Of this we have so many proofs, that there is no need to adduce any example. For all who have lived for a considerable time in ignorance of God will confess it to have been their experience, that they were constrained by the law to a certain kind of fear and reverence of God, till, being regenerated by his Spirit, they began to love him from their hearts.

XII. The third use of the law, which is the principal one, and which is more nearly connected with the proper end of it, relates to the faithful, in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns. For although the law is inscribed and engraven on their hearts by the finger of God, — that is, although they are so excited and animated by the direction of the Spirit, that they desire to obey God, — yet they derive a twofold advantage from the law. For they find it an excellent instrument to give them, from day to day, a better and more certain understanding of the Divine will to which they aspire, and to confirm them in the knowledge of it. As, though a servant be already influenced by the strongest desire of gaining the approbation of his master, yet it is necessary for him carefully to inquire and observe the orders of his master, in order to conform to them. Nor let any one of us exempt himself from this necessity; for no man has already acquired so much wisdom, that he could not by the daily instruction of the law make new advances into a purer knowledge of the Divine will. In the next place, as we need not only instruction, but also exhortation, the servant of God will derive this further advantage from the law; by frequent meditation on it he will be excited to obedience, he will be confirmed in it, and restrained from the slippery path of transgression. For in this manner should the saints stimulate themselves, because, with whatever alacrity they labour for the righteousness of God according to the Spirit, yet they are always burdened with the indolence of the flesh, which prevents their proceeding with due promptitude. To this flesh the law serves as a whip, urging it, like a dull and tardy animal, forwards to its work; and even to the spiritual man, who is not yet delivered from the burden of the flesh, it will be a perpetual spur, that will not permit him to loiter. To this use of the law David referred, when he celebrated it in such remarkable encomiums as these: "The law

of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart : the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes," &c. (*p*) Again : " Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path ; " (*q*) and many others, which he introduces in every part of this psalm. Nor are these assertions repugnant to those of Paul, in which he shows, not what service the law renders to the regenerate, but what it can bestow upon man merely of itself ; whereas the Psalmist in these passages celebrates the great advantage derived, through the Divine teaching, from the reading of the law, by those whom God inspires with an inward promptitude to obedience. And he adverts not only to the precepts, but to the promise of grace annexed to their performance, which alone causes that which is bitter to become sweet. For what would be less amiable than the law, if by demands and threats it only distressed the mind with fear, and harassed it with terror ? But David particularly shows, that in the law he discovered the Mediator, without whom there is nothing pleasant or delightful.

XIII. Some unskilful men, being unable to discern this distinction, rashly explode Moses altogether, and discard the two tables of the law ; because they consider it improper for Christians to adhere to a doctrine which contains the administration of death. Far from us be this profane opinion ; for Moses has abundantly taught us, that the law, which in sinners can only produce death, ought to have a better and more excellent use in the saints. For just before his death he thus addressed the people : " Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe, to do all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you ; because it is your life." (*r*) But if no one can deny that the law exhibits a perfect model of righteousness, either we ought to have no rule for an upright and just life, or it is criminal for us to deviate from it. For there are not many rules of life, but one, which is perpetually and immutably the same. Wherefore, when David represents the life of a righteous man as spent in continual meditations on the law, (*s*) we must not refer it to one period of time only, because it is very suitable for all ages, even to the end of the world. Let us neither be deterred, therefore, nor fly from its instructions, because it prescribes a holiness far more complete than we shall attain, as long as we remain in the prison of the body. For it no longer exercises towards us the part of a rigorous exactor, only to be satisfied by the perfect performance of every injunction ; but in this perfection,

(*p*) Psalm xix. 7, 8.
(*q*) Psalm cxix. 105.

(*r*) Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.
(*s*) Psalm i. 2.

to which it exhorts us, it shows us a goal, to aim at which, during the whole of our lives, would be equally conducive to our interest and consistent with our duty; in which attempt it is happy for us if we fail not. For the whole of this life is a course, which when we have completed, the Lord will grant us to reach that goal, towards which at so great a distance our efforts are now vigorously directed.

XIV. Now, because the law, in regard to the faithful, has the force of an exhortation, not to bind their consciences with a curse, but by its frequent admonitions to arouse their indolence, and reprove their imperfection, — many persons, when they design to express this liberation from its curse, say that the law (I still speak of the moral law) is abrogated to the faithful; not that it no longer enjoins upon them that which is right, but only that it ceases to be to them what it was before, no longer terrifying and confounding their consciences, condemning and destroying them. And such an abrogation of the law is clearly taught by Paul. It appears also to have been preached by our Lord, since he would not have refuted the opinion concerning his abolishing the law, unless it had prevailed among the Jews. Now, as this opinion could not prevail without any pretext, it is probable that it proceeded from a false interpretation of his doctrine; in the same manner as almost all errors have usually taken some colour from the truth. But lest we ourselves fall into the same error, let us accurately distinguish what is abrogated in the law, and what still remains in force. When the Lord declares that he came “not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it,” and that “till heaven and earth shall pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled,” (t) he sufficiently proves that his advent would detract nothing from the observance of the law. And with sufficient reason, since the express end of his advent was to heal the transgressions of it. The doctrine of the law remains, therefore, through Christ, inviolable; which by tuition, admonition, reproof, and correction, forms and prepares us for every good work.

XV. The assertions of Paul respecting the abrogation of the law evidently relate, not to the instruction itself, but to the power of binding the conscience. For the law not only teaches, but authoritatively requires, obedience to its commands. If this obedience be not yielded, and even if there be any partial deficiency of duty, it hurls the thunderbolt of its curse. For this reason the Apostle says, that “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things.” (u) Now, he affirms those to be “of the works of the law,” who place not their righteousness

(t) Matt. v. 17, 18.

(u) Gal. iii. 10.

in the remission of sins, by which we are released from the rigour of the law. He teaches us, therefore, that we must be released from the bondage of the law, unless we would perish in misery under it. But what bondage? the bondage of that austere and rigid exaction, which remits nothing from its strictest requirements, and permits no transgression to pass with impunity; I say, Christ, in order to redeem us from this curse, was "made a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (*w*) In the following chapter, indeed, he tells us, that Christ was "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law;" but in the same sense; for he immediately adds, "that we might receive the adoption of sons." (*x*) What is this? that we might not be oppressed with a perpetual servitude, which would keep our consciences in continual distress with the dread of death. At the same time this truth remains for ever unshaken, that the law has sustained no diminution of its authority, but ought always to receive from us the same veneration and obedience.

XVI. The case of ceremonies, which have been abrogated, not as to their effect, but only as to their use, is very different. Their having been abolished by the advent of Christ, is so far from derogating from their sanctity, that it rather recommends and renders it more illustrious. For as they must have exhibited to the people, in ancient times, a vain spectacle, unless they had discovered the virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ, so, if they had not ceased, we should, in the present age, have been unable to discern for what purpose they were instituted. To prove, therefore, that the observance of them is not only needless, but even injurious, Paul teaches us that they were shadows, the body of which we have in Christ. (*y*) We see, then, that the truth shines with greater splendour in their abolition, than if they still continued to give a distant and obscure representation of Christ, who has openly appeared. For this reason, at the death of Christ, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;" (*z*) because, according to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the living and express image of the heavenly blessings, which before had been only sketched in obscure lineaments, was now clearly revealed. The same truth is conveyed in the declaration of Christ, that "the law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached." (*a*) Not that the holy fathers had been destitute of that preaching which contains the hope of salvation, and of eternal life, but because they saw only at a distance, and under shadows, what we now contemplate in open day. But the reason, why it was neces-

(*w*) Gal. iii. 13.(*x*) Gal. iv. 4, 5.(*y*) Col. ii. 17.(*z*) Matt. xxvii. 51.(*a*) Luke xvi. 16.

sary for the Church of God to ascend from those rudiments to sublimer heights, is explained by John the Baptist: "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (b) For although expiation of sin was truly promised in the ancient sacrifices, and the ark of the covenant was a certain pledge of the paternal favour of God, all these would have been mere shadows, if they had not been founded in the grace of Christ, where alone we may find true and eternal stability. Let us firmly maintain, then, that though the legal rites have ceased to be observed, yet their very discontinuance gives us a better knowledge of their great utility before the advent of Christ, who, abolishing the observance of them, confirmed their virtue and efficacy in his death.

XVII. The reasoning of Paul is attended with more difficulty: "And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross," &c. (c) For it seems to extend the abolition of the law somewhat further, as though we had now no concern with its "ordinances." For they are in an error who understand it simply of the moral law, the abolition of which they, nevertheless, explain to relate to its inexorable severity, rather than to its precepts. Others, more acutely and carefully considering the words of Paul, perceive that they belong particularly to the ceremonial law; and prove that the word "ordinances" is more than once used by Paul in that signification. For he thus expresses himself to the Ephesians: "He is our peace, who hath made both one; having abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man." (d) That he there speaks of the ceremonies, is very evident; for he calls the law "the middle wall of partition," by which the Jews were separated from the Gentiles. Wherefore I allow that the former commentators are justly censured by these; but even these do not appear to me clearly to explain the meaning of the Apostle. For to compare these two passages as in all respects similar, is what I by no means approve. When he designs to assure the Ephesians of their admission into fellowship with the Israelites, he informs them, that the impediment which formerly prevented it is now removed. That consisted in ceremonies. For the rites of ablutions and sacrifices, by which the Jews were consecrated to the Lord, caused a separation between them and the Gentiles. But in the Epistle to the Co-

(b) John i. 17.

(c) Col. ii. 13, 14.

(d) Ephes. ii. 14, 15.

lossians he treats of a sublimer mystery. The controversy there relates to the Mosaic observances, to which the false Apostles were strenuously attempting to subject the Christians. But as in the Epistle to the Galatians he goes to the depth of that controversy, and reduces it to its source, so also in this place. For if in the rites you contemplate nothing but the necessity of performing them, to what purpose were they called a "hand-writing that was against us"? and almost the whole of our redemption made to consist in its being "blotted out?" Wherefore it is evident, that here is something to be considered beside the external ceremonies. And I am persuaded that I have discovered the genuine meaning, at least if that be conceded to me as a truth, which Augustine somewhere very truly asserts, and which he has even borrowed from the positive expressions of an Apostle, (e) that in the Jewish ceremonies there was rather a confession of sins than an expiation of them. For what did they do in offering sacrifices, but confess themselves worthy of death, since they substituted victims to be slain in their stead? What were their purifications, but confessions that they were themselves impure? Thus the hand-writing both of their sin and of their impurity was frequently renewed by them; but that confession afforded no deliverance. For which reason the Apostle says that the death of Christ effected "the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament." (f) The Apostle, therefore, justly denominates the ceremonies "a hand-writing against those who observe them;" because by them they publicly attested their condemnation and impurity. Nor does any objection arise from their having been also partakers of the same grace with us. For this they obtained in Christ, not in the ceremonies, which the Apostle there distinguishes from Christ; for being practised at that time after the introduction of the gospel, they obscured the glory of Christ. We find, then, that the ceremonies, considered by themselves, are beautifully and appositely called a "hand-writing that was against" the salvation of men; because they were solemn instruments testifying their guilt. When the false Apostles wished to bring the Church back to the observance of them, the Apostle deeply investigated their signification, and very justly admonished the Colossians into what circumstances they would relapse, if they should suffer themselves to be thus enslaved by them. For they would at the same time be deprived of the benefit of Christ; since, by the eternal expiation that he has once effected, he has abolished those daily observances, which could only attest their sins, but could never cancel them.

(e) Heb. x. 3—14.

(f) Heb. ix. 15.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE MORAL LAW.

HERE I think it will not be foreign to our subject to introduce the ten precepts of the law, with a brief exposition of them. For this will more clearly evince what I have suggested, that the service which God has once prescribed always remains in full force ; and will also furnish us with a confirmation of the second remark, that the Jews not only learned from it the nature of true piety, but when they saw their inability to observe it, were led by the fear of its sentence, though not without reluctance, to the Mediator. Now, in giving a summary of those things which are requisite to the true knowledge of God, we have shown that we can form no conceptions of his greatness, but his majesty immediately discovers itself to us, to constrain us to worship him. In the knowledge of ourselves, we have laid down this as a principal article, that being divested of all opinion of our own strength, and confidence in our own righteousness, and, on the other hand, discouraged and depressed by a consciousness of our poverty, we should learn true humility and self-dejection. The Lord accomplishes both these things in his law, where, in the first place, claiming to himself the legitimate authority to command, he calls us to revere his Divinity, and prescribes the parts of which this reverence consists ; and in the next place, promulgating the rule of his righteousness, (the rectitude of which, our nature, being depraved and perverted, perpetually opposes ; and from the perfection of which, our ability, through its indolence and imbecility towards that which is good, is at a great distance,) he convicts us both of impotence and of unrighteousness. Moreover, the internal law, which has before been said to be inscribed and as it were engraven on the hearts of all men, suggests to us in some measure the same things which are to be learned from the two tables. For our conscience does not permit us to sleep in perpetual insensibility, but is an internal witness and monitor of the duties we owe to God, shows us the difference between good and evil, and so accuses us when we deviate from our duty. But man, involved as he is in a cloud of errors, scarcely obtains from this law of nature the smallest idea of what worship is accepted by God ; but is certainly at an immense distance from a right understanding of it. Besides, he is so elated with arrogance and ambition, and so blinded with self-love, that he cannot yet take a view of him-

self, and as it were retire within, that he may learn to submit and humble himself, and to confess his misery. Since it was necessary, therefore, both for our dulness and obstinacy, the Lord gave us a written law ; to declare with greater certainty what in the law of nature was too obscure, and by arousing our indolence, to make a deeper impression on our understanding and memory.

II. Now, it is easy to perceive, what we are to learn from the law ; namely, that God, as he is our Creator, justly sustains towards us the character of a Father and of a Lord ; and that on this account we owe to him glory and reverence, love and fear. Moreover, that we are not at liberty to follow every thing to which the violence of our passions may incite us ; but that we ought to be attentive to his will, and to practise nothing but what is pleasing to him. In the next place, that righteousness and rectitude are a delight, but iniquity an abomination to him ; and that, therefore, unless we will with impious ingratitude rebel against our Maker, we must necessarily spend our whole lives in the practice of righteousness. For if we manifest a becoming reverence for him, only when we prefer his will to our own, it follows that there is no other legitimate worship of him, but the observance of righteousness, sanctity, and purity. Nor can we pretend to excuse ourselves by a want of ability, like insolvent debtors. For it is improper for us to measure the glory of God by our ability ; for whatever may be our characters, he ever remains like himself, the friend of righteousness, the enemy of iniquity. Whatever he requires of us, since he can require nothing but what is right, we are under a natural obligation to obey ; but our inability is our own fault. For if we are bound by our own passions, which are under the government of sin, so that we are not at liberty to obey our Father, there is no reason why we should plead this necessity in our defence, the criminality of which is within ourselves, and must be imputed to us.

III. When we have made such a proficiency as this by means of the instruction of the law, we ought, under the same teacher, to retire within ourselves ; from which we may learn two things : First, by comparing our life with the righteousness of the law, we shall find, that we are very far from acting agreeably to the will of God, and are therefore unworthy to retain a place among his creatures, much less to be numbered among his children. Secondly, by examining our strength, we shall see, that it is not only unequal to the observance of the law, but a mere nullity. The necessary consequence of this will be a diffidence in our own strength, and an anxiety and trepidation of mind. For the conscience cannot sustain the load of iniquity, without an immediate discovery of the

Divine judgment. And the Divine judgment cannot be perceived, without inspiring a dread of death. Compelled also by proofs of its impotence, it cannot avoid falling into an absolute despair of its own strength. Both these dispositions produce humility and dejection. The result of all this is, that the man terrified with the apprehension of eternal death, which he sees justly impending over him for his unrighteousness, betakes himself entirely to the Divine mercy, as to the only port of salvation ; and perceiving his inability to fulfil the commands of the law, and feeling nothing but despair in himself, he implores and expects assistance from another quarter.

IV. But not contented with having conciliated a reverence for his righteousness, the Lord has also subjoined promises and threatenings, in order that our hearts might imbibe a love for him, and at the same time a hatred to iniquity. For since the eyes of our mind are too dim to be attracted with the mere beauty of virtue, our most merciful Father has been graciously pleased to allure us to the love and worship of himself by the sweetness of his rewards. He announces, therefore, that he has reserved rewards for virtue, and that the person who obeys his commandments shall not labour in vain. He proclaims, on the contrary, not only that unrighteousness is execrable in his sight, but also that it shall not escape with impunity ; but that he will avenge himself on all the despisers of his majesty. And to urge us by all possible motives, he promises also the blessings of the present life, as well as eternal felicity, to the obedience of those who keep his commandments, the transgressors of which he threatens not only with present calamities, but with the torments of eternal death. For that promise, "these if a man do, he shall live in them," (*g*) and this correspondent threatening, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," (*h*) undoubtedly relate to a future and endless immortality or death. Wherever we read of the Divine benevolence or wrath, the former comprehends eternal life, the latter eternal destruction. Now, of present blessings and curses, the law contains a long catalogue. The penal sanctions display the consummate purity of God, which cannot tolerate iniquity ; while the promises not only manifest his perfect love of righteousness, which he cannot defraud of its reward, but likewise illustrate his wonderful goodness. For since we, with all that belongs to us, are indebted to his majesty, whatever he requires of us, he most justly demands as the payment of a debt ; but the payment of a debt is not entitled to remuneration. Therefore he recedes from the strictness of his claims, when he proposes a reward to our obedience, which is not performed spontaneously,

(*g*) Lev. xviii. 5.(*h*) Ezek. xviii. 4.

as if it were not a duty. But the effect of those promises on us has partly been mentioned already, and will hereafter more clearly appear in its proper place. Suffice it at present, if we remember and consider that the promises of the law contain no mean recommendation of righteousness, to make it more evident how much God is pleased with the observance of it ; and that the penal sanctions are annexed, to render unrighteousness more execrable, lest the sinner, amidst the fascinations of sin, should forget that the judgment of the Legislator awaits him.

V. Now, since the Lord, when about to deliver a rule of perfect righteousness, referred all the parts of it to his own will, this shows that nothing is more acceptable to him than obedience. This is worthy of the most diligent observation, since the licentiousness of the human mind is so inclined to the frequent invention of various services in order to merit his favour. For this irreligious affectation of religion, which is a principle innate in the human mind, has betrayed itself in all ages, and betrays itself even in the present day ; for men always take a pleasure in contriving some way of attaining righteousness, which is not agreeable to the Divine word. Hence, among those which are commonly esteemed good works, the precepts of the law hold a very contracted station, the numberless multitude of human inventions occupying almost the whole space. But what was the design of Moses, unless it was to repress such an unwarrantable license, when, after the promulgation of the law, he addressed the people in the following manner ! “ Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it : thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.” (i) And before, when he had declared that this was their wisdom and their understanding in the sight of other nations, that they had received statutes, and judgments, and ceremonies, from the Lord, he had added, “ Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.” (k) Foreseeing that the Israelites would not rest, but, even after the reception of the law, would labour to produce new species of righteousness, foreign from what the law requires, unless they should be rigorously restrained, God pronounces that his word comprehends the perfection of righteousness ; and yet, though this ought most effectually to have prevented them, they were guilty of that very presumption which was so expressly forbidden. But

(i) Deut. xii. 28, 32.

(k) Deut. iv. 5, 6, 9.

what is this to us? We are certainly bound by the same declaration; for the claims of the Lord on behalf of his law, that it contains the doctrine of perfect righteousness, beyond all doubt remain perpetually the same; yet not contented with it, we are wonderfully laborious in inventing and performing other good works, one after another. The best remedy for this fault will be a constant attention to this reflection; that the law was given to us from heaven to teach us a perfect righteousness; that in it no righteousness is taught, but that which is conformable to the decrees of the Divine will; that it is therefore vain to attempt new species of works in order to merit the favour of God, whose legitimate worship consists solely in obedience, but that any pursuit of good works deviating from the law of God is an intolerable profanation of the Divine and real righteousness. There is much truth also in the observation of Augustine, who calls obedience to God sometimes the parent and guardian, and sometimes the origin of all virtues.

VI. But when we have given an exposition of the Divine law, we shall then more suitably and profitably confirm what has been already advanced concerning its office and use. Before we enter, however, on the discussion of each article separately, it will be useful to premise some things which may contribute to a general knowledge of it. First, let it be understood, that the law inculcates a conformity of life, not only to external probity, but also to internal and spiritual righteousness. Now, though none can deny this, yet very few persons pay proper attention to it. This arises from their not considering the Legislator, by whose nature we ought to estimate also the nature of the law. If a king prohibit, by an edict, adultery, murder, or theft, no man, I confess, will be liable to the penalty of such a law, who has only conceived in his mind a desire to commit adultery, murder, or theft, but has not perpetrated any of them. Because the superintendence of a mortal legislator extends only to the external conduct, and his prohibitions are not violated unless the crimes be actually committed. But God, whose eye nothing escapes, and who esteems not so much the external appearance as the purity of the heart, in the prohibition of adultery, murder, and theft, comprises a prohibition of lust, wrath, hatred, coveting what belongs to another, fraud, and every similar vice. For, being a spiritual Legislator, he addresses himself to the soul as much as to the body. Now, the murder of the soul is wrath and hatred; the theft of the soul is evil concupiscence and avarice; the adultery of the soul is lust. But it will be said, that human laws also relate to designs and intentions, and not to fortuitous events. This I grant; but they relate to such designs and intentions as have been manifested in outward actions. They examine and consider with

what intention every act has been performed ; but do not scrutinize the secret thoughts. Human laws therefore are satisfied, when a man abstains from external transgression. But, on the contrary, the Divine law being given to our minds, the proper regulation of them is the principal requisite to a righteous observance of it. But men in general, even while they resolutely dissemble their contempt of the law, dispose their eyes, their feet, their hands, and all the parts of their body, to some kind of observance of it, while at the same time their hearts are entirely alienated from all obedience to it, and they suppose that they have discharged their duty, if they have concealed from man what they practise in the sight of God. They hear the commands, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal. They draw not the sword to commit murder ; they never associate with harlots ; they lay no violent hands on the property of others. All these things thus far are well ; but in their whole souls they breathe after murders, they kindle into lust, they look with dishonest eyes on the property of others, and in their cupidity they devour it. Now, then, they are destitute of the principal requisite of the law. Whence arises such gross stupidity, but from discarding the Legislator, and accommodating a righteousness to their own inclination ? These persons Paul strongly opposes, when he affirms that "the law is spiritual ;" (*l*) signifying that it requires not only the obedience of the soul, the understanding, and the will, but even an angelic purity, which, being cleansed from all the pollution of the flesh, may savour entirely of the Spirit.

VII. When we say that this is the sense of the law, we are not introducing a novel interpretation of our own, but following Christ, who is the best interpreter of it. For the people having imbibed from the Pharisees the corrupt opinion, that he, who has perpetrated no external act of disobedience to the law, is an observer of the law, he confutes this very dangerous error, and pronounces an unchaste look at a woman to be adultery ; he declares them to be murderers, who hate a brother ; he makes them "in danger of the judgment," who have only conceived resentment in their hearts ; them "in danger of the council," who in murmuring or quarrelling have discovered any sign of an angry mind ; and them "in danger of hell fire," who with opprobrious and slanderous language have broken forth into open rage. (*m*) Persons who have not perceived these things, have pretended that Christ was another Moses, the giver of an evangelical law, which supplied the deficiencies of the law of Moses. Whence that common max-

(*l*) Rom. vii. 14.(*m*) Matt. v. 22, 28.

im, concerning the perfection of the evangelical law, that it is far superior to the old law — a maxim in many respects very pernicious. For when we introduce a summary of the commandments, it will appear from Moses himself what an indignity this fixes on the Divine law. It certainly insinuates that all the sanctity of the fathers under the Old Testament, was not very remote from hypocrisy, and draws us aside from that one perpetual rule of righteousness. But there is not the least difficulty in the confutation of this error; for they have supposed that Christ made additions to the law, whereas he only restored it to its genuine purity, by clearing it from the obscurities and blemishes which it had contracted from the falsehoods and the leaven of the Pharisees.

VIII. It must be observed, in the second place, that the commands and prohibitions always imply more than the words express; but this must be so restricted, that we may not make it a Lesbian rule, by the assistance of which the Scripture may be licentiously perverted, and any sense be extorted at pleasure from any passage. For some people, by this immoderate and excursive liberty, cause one person to despise the authority of the law, and another to despair of understanding it. Therefore, if it be possible, we must find some way that may lead us by a straight and steady course to the will of God. We must inquire, I say, how far our interpretation ought to exceed the limits of the expressions; that it may evidently appear, not to be an appendix of human glosses annexed to the Divine law, but a faithful explanation of the pure and genuine sense of the legislator. Indeed, in all the commandments, the figure synecdoche, by which a part is expressed instead of the whole, is so conspicuous, that he may justly be the object of ridicule, who would restrict the sense of the law within the narrow limits of the words. It is plain, then, that a sober exposition of the law goes beyond the words of it; but how far, remains doubtful, unless some rule be laid down. The best rule, then, I conceive will be, that the exposition be directed to the design of the precept; that in regard to every precept it should be considered for what end it was given. For example, every precept is either imperative or prohibitory. The true meaning of both these kinds of precepts will immediately occur to us, if we consider the design or the end of them; as the end of the fifth commandment is, that honour may be given to them to whom God assigns it. The substance of this precept, then, is, that it is right, and pleasing to God, that we should honour those on whom he has conferred any excellence, and that contemptuous and contumacious conduct towards them is an abomination to him. The design of the first commandment is, that God alone may be

worshipped. The substance of this precept, then, will be, that true piety, that is, the worship of his majesty, is pleasing to God, and that he abominates impiety. Thus in every commandment we should first examine the subject of it; in the next place we should inquire the end of it, till we discover what the Legislator really declares in it to be either pleasing or displeasing to him. Lastly, we must draw an argument from this commandment to the opposite of it, in this manner:—If this please God, the contrary must displease him; if this displease him, the contrary must please him; if he enjoin this, he forbids the contrary; if he forbid this, he enjoins the contrary.

IX. What we now rather obscurely hint at, will be fully and practically elucidated in our exposition of the commandments. Wherefore it is sufficient to have suggested it; only the last position, which otherwise might not be understood, or, if understood, might seem unreasonable, requires to be briefly established by suitable proof. It needs no proof, that an injunction of any thing good is a prohibition of the opposite evil; for every man will concede it. And common sense will easily admit, that a prohibition of crimes is a command to practise the contrary duties. It is commonly considered as a commendation of virtues, when censure is passed on the opposite vices. But we require somewhat more than is commonly intended by those forms of expression. For men generally understand the virtue which is opposite to any vice to be an abstinence from that vice; but we affirm that it goes further, even to the actual performance of the opposite duty. Therefore, in this precept, "Thou shalt not kill," the common sense of mankind will perceive nothing more than that we ought to abstain from all acts of injury to others, and from all desire to commit any such acts. I maintain that it also implies, that we should do every thing that we possibly can towards the preservation of the life of our neighbour. And not to speak without reason, I prove it in the following manner: God forbids us to injure the safety of our brother, because he wishes his life to be dear and precious to us: he therefore at the same time requires of us all those offices of love which may contribute to the preservation of it. Thus we perceive, that the end of the precept will always discover to us whatever it enjoins or forbids us to do.

X. Many reasons are frequently given, why God has, as it were, in incomplete precepts, rather partially intimated his will than positively expressed it; but the reason which affords me more satisfaction than all others is the following. Because the flesh always endeavours to extenuate, and by specious pretexts to conceal the turpitude of sin, unless it be exceedingly

palpable, he has proposed, by way of example, in every kind of transgression, that which is most atrocious and detestable, and the mention of which inspires us with horror, in order that our minds might be impressed with the greater detestation of every sin. This often deceives us in forming an opinion of vices; if they be private, we extenuate them. The Lord destroys these subterfuges, when he accustoms us to refer the whole multitude of vices to these general heads, which best represent the abominable nature of every species of transgressions. For example, anger and hatred are not supposed to be such execrable crimes when they are mentioned under their own proper appellations; but when they are forbidden to us under the name of murder, we have a clearer perception how abominable they are in the view of God, by whose word they are classed under such a flagitious and horrible species of crimes; and being influenced by his judgment, we accustom ourselves more seriously to consider the atrociousness of those offences which we previously accounted trivial.

XI. In the third place, let it be considered, what is intended by the division of the Divine law into two tables; the frequent and solemn mention of which all wise men will judge not to be without some particular design. And we have a reason at hand, which removes all ambiguity on this subject. For God has divided his law into two parts, which comprise the perfection of righteousness, so that he has assigned the first part to the duties of religion, which peculiarly belongs to the worship of his majesty, and the second to those duties of charity, which respect men. The first foundation of righteousness is certainly the worship of God; and if this be destroyed, all the other branches of righteousness, like the parts of a disjointed and falling edifice, are torn asunder and scattered. For what kind of righteousness will you pretend to, because you refrain from harassing men by acts of theft and rapine, if at the same time you atrociously and sacrilegiously defraud the majesty of God of the glory which is due to him?—because you do not pollute your body with fornication, if you blasphemously profane the sacred name of God?—because you murder no man, if you strive to destroy and extinguish all memory of God? It is in vain, therefore, to boast of righteousness without religion; as well might the trunk of a body be exhibited as a beautiful object, after the head has been cut off. Nor is religion only the head of righteousness, but the very soul of it, constituting all its life and vigour; for without the fear of God, men preserve no equity and love among themselves. We therefore call the worship of God the principle and foundation of righteousness, because, if that be wanting, whatever equity, continence, and temperance men may practise among themselves, it is all

vain and frivolous in the sight of God. We assert also that it is the source and soul of righteousness; because men are taught by it to live temperately and justly with one another, if they venerate God as the judge of right and wrong. In the first table, therefore, he instructs us in piety and the proper duties of religion, in which his majesty is to be worshipped; in the second he prescribes the duties which the fear of his name should excite us to practise in society. For this reason our Lord, as the evangelists inform us, (n) summarily comprised the whole law in two principal points — that we love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength; and that we love our neighbour as ourselves. Of the two parts in which he comprehends the whole law, we see how he directs one towards God, and assigns the other to men.

XII. But, although the whole law is contained in these two principal points, yet our God, in order to remove every pretext of excuse, has been pleased in the ten commandments more diffusely and explicitly to declare, as well those things which relate to our honour, love, and fear of him, as those which pertain to that charity, which he commands us for his sake to exercise towards men. Nor is it a useless study to examine into the division of the commandments; provided you remember it is a subject of such a nature, that every man ought to be at liberty to judge of it, and that we ought not contentiously to oppose any who may differ from us respecting it. But we are under a necessity of touching on this topic, lest the reader should despise or wonder at the division that we shall adopt, as a novel invention. That the law is divided into ten precepts, is beyond all controversy, being frequently established by the authority of God himself. The question, therefore, is not concerning the number of the precepts, but concerning the manner of dividing them. Those who divide them, so as to assign three precepts to the first table, and leave the remaining seven to the second, expunge from the number the precept concerning images, or at least conceal it under the first; whereas it is undoubtedly delivered by the Lord as a distinct commandment. But the tenth, against coveting the property of our neighbour, they improperly divide into two. We shall see presently that such a method of division was unknown in purer ages. Others reckon with us four articles in the first table; but the first commandment they consider as a simple promise, without a precept. Now, I understand the “ten words” mentioned by Moses to be ten precepts; and I think I see that number disposed in the most beautiful order. And therefore, unless I am convinced by clear argument, leaving

(n) Matt. xxiii. 37—40. Luke x. 27.

them in possession of their opinion, I shall follow what appears to me to be preferable; that is, that what they make the first precept is a preface to the whole law; that it is followed by the precepts, four belonging to the first table and six to the second, in the order in which they will now be recited. Origen has mentioned this division as if it were universally received in his time without any controversy. Augustine also coincides with us; for in enumerating them to Boniface, he observes this order: That God alone be religiously worshipped; that no adoration be paid to an idol; that the name of the Lord be not taken in vain. He had before spoken separately of the shadowy precept of the sabbath. It is true, that in another passage he expresses his approbation of the former division, but for a most trivial reason; namely, that if the first table be digested into three precepts, the trinal number will be a more conspicuous exhibition of the mystery of the Trinity. In the same place, however, he does not conceal that in other respects he prefers our division. Beside these writers, the author of the unfinished treatise on Matthew is of the same opinion with us. Josephus, doubtless according to the common opinion of his time, assigns five precepts to each table. This is repugnant to reason, because it confounds the distinction between religion and charity; and is also refuted by the authority of our Lord, who in Matthew places the precept concerning honour to parents in the second table. Now let us hear God himself speaking in his own words.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

XIII. Whether you make the first sentence a part of the first commandment, or read it separately, is a matter of indifference to me, provided you allow it to be a preface to the whole law. The first object of attention in making laws is to guard against their being abrogated by contempt. Therefore God in the first place provides, that the majesty of the law, which he is about to deliver, may never fall into contempt; and to sanction it he uses a threefold argument. He asserts his authority and right of giving commands, and thereby lays his chosen people under a necessity of obeying them. He exhibits a promise of grace, to allure them by its charms to the pursuit of holiness. He reminds the Israelites of his favour, to convict them of ingratitude if they do not conduct themselves in a manner correspondent to his goodness. The

name LORD, or JEHOVAH, designates his authority and legitimate dominion. For if all things be of him, and if in him all things consist, it is reasonable that all things be referred to him, agreeably to the observation of Paul. (*o*) Therefore by this word alone we are brought into complete subjection to the power of the Divine majesty; for it would be monstrous for us to desire to remove ourselves from his jurisdiction, out of whom we cannot exist.

XIV. After having shown that he has a right to command, and that obedience is his just due, — that he may not appear to constrain us by necessity alone, he sweetly allures us by pronouncing himself the God of the Church. For the expression implies the mutual relation which is contained in that promise, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (*p*) Whence Christ proves the immortality of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from the declaration of the Lord, that he is their God. (*q*) Wherefore it is the same as if he had said, I have chosen you as my people, not only to bless you in the present life, but to bestow upon you abundant felicity in the life to come. The design of this favour is remarked in various places in the law; for when the Lord in mercy condescends to number us among the society of his people, “He chooseth us,” says Moses, “to be a peculiar people unto himself, a holy people, to keep his commandments.” (*r*) Hence that exhortation, “Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.” (*s*) Now, from these two considerations is derived the remonstrance of the Lord by the Prophet: “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?” (*t*)

XV. Next follows a recital of his kindness, which ought to produce a most powerful effect upon our minds, in proportion to the detestable guilt of ingratitude, even among men. He reminded the Israelites, indeed, of a favour which they had recently experienced, but which, on account of its magnitude and concomitant miracles, being worthy of everlasting remembrance, might also have an influence on succeeding generations. Besides, it was particularly suitable to the present occasion, when the law was about to be published; for the Lord suggests that they were liberated from a miserable slavery in order that they might serve the author of their liberty with a promptitude of reverence and obedience. To retain us in the true and exclusive worship of himself, he generally distinguishes himself by certain epithets, by which he discriminates his sacred name from all idols and fictitious deities. For, as I have

(*o*) Rom. xi. 36.

(*p*) Jer. xxxi. 33.

(*q*) Matt. xxii. 32.

(*r*) Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2; xxvi. 18.

(*s*) Lev. xi. 44.

(*t*) Mal. i. 6.

before observed, such is our proneness to vanity and presumption, that as soon as God is mentioned, our mind is unable to guard itself from falling into some vain imagination. Therefore, when God intends to apply a remedy to this evil, he adorns his majesty with certain titles, and thus circumscribes us with barriers, that we may not run into various follies, and presumptuously invent to ourselves some new deity, discarding the living God, and setting up an idol in his stead. For this reason the Prophets, whenever they intend a proper designation of him, invest him, and as it were surround him, with those characters under which he had manifested himself to the people of Israel. Yet, when he is called "the God of Abraham," or "the God of Israel," when he is said to reside "between the cherubim," "in the temple," "at Jerusalem," (v) these and similar forms of expression do not confine him to one place, or to one nation; they are only used to fix the thoughts of the pious on that God, who, in the covenant which he has made with Israel, has given such a representation of himself, that it is not proper to deviate in the smallest instance from such a model. Nevertheless, let it be concluded, that the deliverance of the Jews is mentioned to induce them to devote themselves with more alacrity to the service of God, who justly claims a right to their obedience. But, that we may not suppose this to have no relation to us, it behoves us to consider, that the servitude of Israel in Egypt was a type of the spiritual captivity, in which we are all detained, till our celestial Deliverer extricates us by the power of his arm, and introduces us into the kingdom of liberty. As formerly, therefore, when he designed to restore the dispersed Israelites to the worship of his name, he rescued them from the intolerable tyranny of Pharaoh, by which they were oppressed, so now he delivers all those, whose God he declares himself to be, from the fatal dominion of Satan, which was represented by that corporeal captivity. Wherefore there is no one, whose mind ought not to be excited to listen to the law, which he is informed came from the King of kings; from whom as all creatures derive their origin, so it is reasonable that they should regard him as their end in all things. Every man, I say, ought to welcome the Legislator; to observe whose commands he is taught that he is particularly chosen; from whose benignity he expects an abundance of temporal blessings, and a life of immortality and glory; by whose wonderful power and mercy he knows himself to be delivered from the jaws of death.

XVI. Having firmly established the authority of his law, he publishes the first commandment, "That we should have

(v) Exod. iii. 6. Amos i. 2. Hab. ii. 20. Psalm lxxx. 1; xcix. 1. Isaiah xxxvii. 16.

no other gods before him." The end of this precept is, that God chooses to have the sole preëminence, and to enjoy undiminished his authority among his people. To produce this end, he enjoins us to keep at a distance from all impiety and superstition, by which we should either diminish or obscure the glory of his Deity; and for the same reason he directs us to worship and adore him in the exercise of true piety. The simplicity of the language almost expresses this; for we cannot "have" God without at the same time comprising all that belongs to him. Therefore, when he forbids us to "have" any other gods, he implies, that we must not transfer to another what belongs to him. But although the duties we owe to God are innumerable, yet they may not improperly be classed under four general heads—adoration, a necessary branch of which is the spiritual obedience of the conscience; trust; invocation; and thanksgiving. By adoration I mean the reverence and worship which he receives from every one of us who has submitted to his majesty. Wherefore it is not without reason that I make it partly to consist in a subjection of our consciences to his law; [for it is a spiritual homage which is rendered to him, as to a sovereign King possessed of all power over our souls.] Trust is a secure dependence on him arising from a knowledge of his perfections; when ascribing to him all wisdom, righteousness, power, truth, and goodness, we esteem ourselves happy only in communications from him. Invocation is the application of our minds, under every pressure of necessity, resorting to his fidelity, faithfulness, and assistance, as its only defence. Thanksgiving is gratitude, which ascribes to him the praise of all blessings. As the Lord permits no portion of these duties to be transferred to another, so he commands them to be wholly given to himself. Nor will it be sufficient for you to refrain from worshipping any other god, unless you also refrain from imitating certain nefarious despisers, who take the compendious method of treating all religions with contempt. But the observance of this precept must be preceded by true religion, leading our minds to the living God; that being endued with the knowledge of him, they may aspire to admire, fear, and worship his majesty, to receive his communication of blessings, to request his aid upon all occasions, to acknowledge and celebrate the magnificence of his works, as the sole end in all the actions of our lives. We must also beware of corrupt superstition, by which those whose minds are diverted from the true God, are carried about after various deities. Therefore, if we be contented with one God, let us remember what has before been observed, that all fictitious deities must be driven far away, and that we must not divide that worship which he claims exclusively to himself. For it is criminal to detract

even the smallest portion from his glory; he must be left in possession of all that belongs to him. The following clause, "before me," aggravates the atrociousness of the offence; for God is provoked to jealousy whenever we substitute the figments of our own minds instead of him; just as an immodest woman, by openly introducing an adulterer into the presence of her husband, would inflame his mind with the greater resentment. When God, therefore, by the presence of his power and grace, gave a proof of his regard to the people whom he had chosen, — in order the more forcibly to deter them from the crime of rebellion against him, he warns them of the impossibility of introducing new deities without his being a witness and spectator of the sacrilege. For this presumption rises to the highest degree of impiety, when man imagines that he can elude the observation of God in his acts of rebellion. God, on the contrary, proclaims, that whatever we devise, whatever we attempt, whatever we perform, is present to his view. Our conscience must therefore be pure even from the most latent thoughts of apostasy, if we wish our religion to obtain the approbation of the Lord. For he requires from us the glory due to his Divinity undiminished and uncorrupted, not only in external confession, but in his own eyes, which penetrate the inmost recesses of our hearts.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.

XVII. As in the preceding commandment the Lord has declared himself to be the one God, besides whom no other deities ought to be imagined or worshipped, so in this he more clearly reveals his nature, and the kind of worship with which he ought to be honoured, that we may not dare to form any carnal conceptions of him. The end, therefore, of this precept is, that he will not have his legitimate worship profaned with superstitious rites. Wherefore, in a word, he calls us off, and wholly abstracts us from carnal observances, which our foolish minds are accustomed to devise, when they conceive of God according to the grossness of their own apprehensions; and therefore he calls us to the service which rightfully belongs to him; that is, the spiritual worship which he has instituted. He marks what is the grossest transgression of this kind; that is, external idolatry. And this precept consists of two parts. The first restrains us from licentiously daring to make God, who is

incomprehensible, the subject of our senses, or to represent him under any visible form. The second prohibits us from paying religious adoration to any images. He likewise briefly enumerates all the forms, in which he used to be represented by profane and superstitious nations. By those things which are in heaven, he means the sun, the moon, and the other stars, and perhaps birds; as, when he explains his meaning in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, he mentions birds as well as the stars. (*w*) This I should not have remarked, had I not known some persons injudiciously refer this clause to angels. I omit the other particulars, as needing no explanation. And in the first book (*x*) we have already sufficiently proved that whatever visible representations of God are invented by man, are diametrically opposite to his nature; and that, therefore, as soon as ever idols are introduced, true religion is immediately corrupted and adulterated.

XVIII. The penal sanction which is annexed ought to have no small influence in arousing us from our lethargy. He thus threatens :

For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

This is equivalent to a declaration that it is to him alone that we ought to adhere. And to urge us to it, he announces his power, which he permits none with impunity to despise or undervalue. For the Hebrew word *El*, which is here used for God, is expressive of strength. In the second place, he calls himself "a jealous God," who can bear no rival. Thirdly, he declares that he will avenge his majesty and glory on those who transfer it to creatures or to graven images; and that not with the transient punishment of the original transgressors only, but of their posterity to the third and fourth generation; that is, of those who shall imitate the impiety of their fathers; as he also permanently displays his mercy and goodness, through a long line of posterity, to those who love him and keep his law. It is very common for God to assume the character of a husband to us; for the union, in which he connects us with himself, when he receives us into the bosom of his Church, bears a resemblance to the sacred conjugal relation, which requires to be supported by mutual fidelity. As he performs towards us all the duties of a true and faithful husband, so he demands from us the reciprocal duties of conjugal love and chastity; that

(*w*) Deut. iv. 17.

(*x*) Cap. xi. xii.

is, that we do not prostitute our souls to Satan, to lust, and to the impurity of the carnal appetites. Wherefore, when he reproves the apostasy of the Jews, he complains that they had discarded chastity, and were polluted with adulteries. (y) Therefore, as a husband, in proportion to the superiority of his purity and chastity, is the more grievously incensed, if he perceive the affection of his wife inclining to a rival, so the Lord, who has in truth espoused us to himself, declares that he feels the most ardent jealousy, whenever we neglect the sacred purity of his conjugal relation to us, and defile ourselves with criminal lusts, but especially when we transfer to any other, or adulterate with any superstition, the worship of his majesty, which ought to be preserved in the most consummate perfection; since by such conduct we not only violate the faith pledged in our nuptials, but even pollute our souls with spiritual adultery.

XIX. Let us inquire what he intends by his threatening to "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation." For besides that it is inconsistent with the equity of the Divine justice to inflict upon an innocent person the punishment due to the offences of another, God himself declares that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father." (z) But this expression is repeated more than once, concerning a deferring to future generations of the punishments of crimes committed by their ancestors. For Moses frequently speaks of "the Lord visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." (a) In like manner Jeremiah: "Thou showest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them." (b) Some, who labour very hard to solve this difficulty, are of opinion that its meaning is to be confined to temporal punishments; which if children sustain through the sins of their parents, there is nothing absurd in it; because they frequently conduce to the salvation of those on whom they are inflicted. This is certainly true. For Isaiah denounced to Hezekiah, that on account of the sin which he had committed, his sons should be despoiled of the kingdom and carried away into exile. (c) The families of Pharaoh and Abimelech are afflicted on account of the injury sustained by Abraham. (d) But when this is adduced as a solution of these questions, it is rather an evasion of it, than a proper explanation. For in this and in similar places the Lord threatens a punishment too great to be terminated by the limits of the present life. It must therefore

(y) Jer. iii. 1, 2. Hos. ii. 2.
(z) Ezek. xviii. 20.

(a) Num. xiv. 18.
(b) Jer. xxxii. 18.

(c) Isaiah xxxix. 7.
(d) Gen. xii. 17; xx. 3.

be understood as a declaration that the curse of the Lord righteously rests, not only on the person of an impious man, but also on his whole family. Where it has rested, what can be expected, but that the father, being destitute of the Spirit of God, will lead a most flagitious life ; and that the son, experiencing, in consequence of the iniquity of his father, a similar dereliction by the Lord, will pursue the same path to perdition ; and that the grandson and the great grandson, the execrable posterity of detestable men, will run headlong after them down the same precipice of destruction ?

XX. First let us inquire, whether such punishment be inconsistent with the Divine justice. If the whole nature of man be worthy of condemnation, we know that destruction awaits those who are not favoured by the Lord with the communication of his grace. Nevertheless, they perish through their own iniquity, and not through the unjust hatred of God. Nor is there any room left for expostulation, why they are not assisted by Divine grace to obtain salvation as well as others. Since it is a punishment, therefore, inflicted on the impious and flagitious, in consequence of their transgressions, that their families remain destitute of Divine grace for many generations, who can bring any accusation against God for this most righteous instance of his vengeance ? But it will be said, the Lord declares, on the contrary, that the punishment of the sin of the father shall not be transferred to the son. Observe the subject that is treated of in that place. The Israelites, after they had been long harassed by numerous and unceasing calamities, began to use this proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge ;" (e) by which they insinuated, that sins had been committed by their parents, the punishment of which was inflicted on them who were otherwise righteous and innocent, more through the implacable wrath of God, than through a just severity. The Prophet announces to them that this is not the case, but that they are punished for their own transgressions, and that it is incompatible with the Divine justice to punish a righteous son for the iniquity of a wicked father. Nor is this to be found in the penal sanction now under consideration. For if the visitation, of which we are treating, be fulfilled, when God removes from the family of the impious his grace, the light of his truth, and the other means of salvation, the very circumstance of children blinded and abandoned by him being found treading in the footsteps of their fathers, is an instance of their bearing the curse in consequence of the crimes of their parents. But their being the subjects of temporal miseries, and at length of eternal perdition, are punishments from

(e) Ezek. xviii. 2.

the righteous judgment of God, not for the sins of others, but on account of their own iniquity.

XXI. On the other hand, God gives a promise to extend his mercy to a thousand generations ; which also frequently occurs in the Scripture, and is inserted in the solemn covenant with the Church : "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." (*f*) In allusion to this, Solomon says, that "the children of the just man are blessed after him ;" (*g*) not only as the effect of a religious education, which is of no small importance, but also in consequence of the blessing promised in the covenant, that the grace of God shall perpetually remain in the families of the pious. This is a source of peculiar consolation to the faithful, but to the impious of great terror ; for if, even after death, the memory of righteousness and iniquity has so much influence with God, that the curse of the one and the blessing of the other will redound to posterity, much more will it remain on the persons of the actors themselves. Now, it is no objection to our argument, that the descendants of the impious sometimes grow better, while those of the faithful degenerate ; since the Legislator never intended to establish in this case such an invariable rule, as would derogate from his own free choice. For it is sufficient for the consolation of the righteous and the terror of the sinner, that the denunciation is not vain or inefficacious, although it be not always executed. For as the temporal punishments inflicted on a few wicked men are testimonies of the Divine wrath against sin, and of the judgment that will hereafter be pronounced on all sinners, though many escape with impunity even to the end of their lives, so, when the Lord exhibits one example of this blessing, in manifesting his mercy and goodness to the son for the sake of his father, he affords a proof of his constant and perpetual favour to his worshippers ; and when, in any one instance, he pursues the iniquity of the father in the son, he shows what a judgment awaits all the reprobate on account of their own transgressions ; the certainty of which was what he principally designed in this passage. He also gives us a cursory intimation of the greatness of his mercy, which he extends to a thousand generations, while he has assigned only four generations to his vengeance.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

XXII. The end of this precept is, that the Lord will have the majesty of his name to be held inviolably sacred by us.

(*f*) Gen. xvii. 7.

(*g*) Prov. xx. 7.

The substance of the command therefore is, that we ought not to profane that name by a contemptuous or irreverent use of it. This prohibition necessarily implies an injunction, that we studiously and carefully treat it with religious veneration. Therefore it becomes us to regulate our thoughts and words in such a manner that we may not think or speak any thing concerning God and his mysteries, but with the greatest sobriety and reverence; that in meditating on his works we may form no opinion that is dishonourable to him. These three things, I say, we ought most carefully to observe — first, that whatever we think, and whatever we say of him, should savour of his excellence, correspond to the sacred sublimity of his name, and tend to the exaltation of his magnificence. Secondly, we should not rashly and preposterously abuse his holy word and adorable mysteries to the purposes of ambition, of avarice, or of amusement; but as they bear an impression of the dignity of his name, they should always receive from us the honour and esteem which belong to them. Lastly, we should not injure his works by obloquy or detraction, as some miserable mortals are accustomed to do; but whenever we mention any thing done by him, we should celebrate it with encomiums of wisdom, justice, and goodness. This is “sanctifying” the name of God. In every other case, it is violated by a vain and criminal abuse, because it is carried beyond the limits of that legitimate use, to which alone it is consecrated; and though no other consequence ensue, it is deprived of its dignity, and by degrees rendered contemptible. But if it be so criminal thus rashly and unseasonably to introduce the name of God on every occasion, much more so must it be to apply it to such nefarious uses as they do, who make it subservient to the superstitious of necromancy, to horrible imprecations, to unlawful exorcisms, and to other impious incantations. But an oath is the thing principally contemplated in the command, as the most detestable instance of the perverse abuse of the Divine name; and this is done to inspire us with the greater horror of every species of profanation of it. That this precept relates to the worship of God and the reverence of his name, and not to the equity that ought to be observed among mankind, appears from this — that the subsequent condemnation, in the second table, of perjury and false witness, by which society is injured, would be a needless repetition, if the present precept related to a civil duty. Besides, the division of the law requires this; for, as we have already observed, it is not in vain that God has distributed the law into two tables. Whence we conclude, that in this command he vindicates his just claims, and guards the sanctity of his name, but does not teach the duties which men owe to each other.

XXIII. In the first place, we have to explain what an oath is. It consists in calling upon God as a witness, to confirm the truth of any declaration that we make. For execrations, which contain manifest reproaches against God, are not worthy to be mentioned among oaths. That such an attestation, when rightly performed, is a species of Divine worship, is evident from many places of Scripture; as when Isaiah prophesies of the vocation of the Assyrians and Egyptians to participate in the covenant with Israel. "They shall speak," says he, "the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts." (*h*) By "swearing to the Lord" here is intended making a profession of religion. Again, when he speaks of the extension of his kingdom: "He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth." (*i*) Jeremiah says, "If they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The Lord liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then shall they be built in the midst of my people." (*k*) And we are justly said to profess our religion to the Lord, when we invoke his name to bear witness to us. For thereby we confess that he is truth itself, eternal and immutable; whom we call not only as a witness of the truth, excelling all others, but also as the only defender of it, who is able to bring to light things which are concealed, and in a word, as the searcher of all hearts. For where human testimonies are wanting, we resort for refuge to the testimony of God; and particularly when any thing is to be affirmed, which is hidden in the conscience. For which reason the Lord is extremely angry with them who swear by strange gods, and interprets that species of swearing as a proof of manifest defection from him. "Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods." (*l*) And he declares the atrociousness of this crime by his denunciation of punishment: "I will cut off them that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham." (*m*)

XXIV. Now, since we understand it to be the will of the Lord, that we should reverence his name in our oaths, we ought to use so much the more caution, lest, instead of reverence, they betray dishonour or contempt of it. It is no trifling insult to him, when perjury is committed in his name; and therefore the law calls it a profanation. (*n*) But what remains to the Lord, when he is despoiled of his truth? he will then cease to be God. But he is certainly despoiled of it, when he is made an abettor and approver of a falsehood. Wherefore, when Joshua would induce Achan to a confession of the truth,

(*h*) Isaiah xix. 18.
(*i*) Isaiah lxy. 16.

(*k*) Jer. xii. 16.
(*l*) Jer. v. 7.

(*m*) Zeph. i. 4, 5.
(*n*) Lev. xix. 12.

he says, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel;" (*o*) implying in this that the Lord is grievously dishonoured, if perjury be committed in his name. Nor is this strange; for in such a case we do all that is in our power to brand his sacred name with a falsehood. And that this form of expression was customary among the Jews, whenever any man was called to take an oath, appears from a similar adjuration used by the Pharisees in the Gospel of John. (*p*) To this caution we are accustomed by the forms of oaths which are used in the Scriptures: "The Lord liveth;" (*q*) "God do so and more also to me;" (*r*) "I call God for a record upon my soul;" (*s*) which imply, that we cannot invoke God to be a witness to our declarations, without imprecating his vengeance upon us if we be guilty of perjury.

XXV. The name of God is rendered vile and contemptible, when it is used in unnecessarily swearing even to what is true; for in this instance also it is taken in vain. Wherefore it will not be sufficient to abstain from perjury; unless we also remember, that swearing is permitted and appointed, not for the sake of our pleasure or caprice, but from necessity; and that the lawful use of it, therefore, is transgressed by those who apply it to cases where it is not necessary. Now, no other necessity can be pretended, but when we want to serve either religion or charity. This crime, in the present day, is carried to a very great extent; and it is so much the more intolerable, since by its frequency it has ceased to be considered as a crime, though before the Divine tribunal it is deemed no trivial offence. For the name of God is universally profaned without concern in trifling conversations; and it is not considered as sinful, because this presumptuous wickedness has been so long practised with impunity. But the Divine command remains valid; the sanction remains firm; and a future day will witness the completion of that part of it which denounces a particular punishment against those who take his name in vain. This precept is violated also in another way. If in our oaths we substitute the servants of God in the place of God himself, we are guilty of manifest impiety; because we thereby transfer to them the glory due to the Deity. Nor is it without reason, that God, by a special command, enjoins us to swear by his name, (*t*) and by a special prohibition interdicts us from swearing by any strange gods. (*v*) And the Apostle evidently attests the same, when he says, that "men swear by the greater, but that God, because he could swear by no greater, sware by himself." (*w*)

(*o*) Joshua vii. 19.(*p*) John ix. 24.(*q*) 1 Sam. xiv. 45.(*r*) 2 Kings vi. 31.(*s*) 2 Cor. i. 23.(*t*) Deut. vi. 13.(*v*) Exod. xxiii. 13.(*w*) Heb. vi. 13, 16.

XXVI. The Anabaptists, not satisfied with this limitation of oaths, condemn all oaths without exception; because the prohibition of Christ is general: "I say unto you, Swear not at all. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (x) But by this mode of interpretation they set Christ in opposition to the Father, as though he descended into this world to abrogate the Father's decrees. For in the law the eternal God not only permits an oath, as a lawful thing, which would be sufficient to justify the use of it, but in cases of necessity commands it. (y) Now, Christ asserts, that "he and his Father are one," that "he acts only according to the commands of the Father," that "his doctrine is not of himself," &c. (z) What then? Will they make God to contradict himself, by prohibiting and condemning in our conduct that which he has before approved and enjoined? But as the words of Christ involve some difficulty, let us enter on a brief examination of them. Here we shall never arrive at the truth, unless we attend to the design of Christ, and advert to the subject of which he is there treating. His design is not to relax or to restrict the law, but to reduce it to its true and genuine meaning, which had been very much corrupted by the false comments of the scribes and Pharisees. If we bear this in our minds, we shall not be of opinion that Christ condemned all oaths, but only those which transgress the rule of the law. It appears to have been the custom of the people at that time to avoid nothing but perjuries; whereas the law forbids not only perjuries, but likewise all vain and superfluous oaths. Our Lord, therefore, that infallible expositor of the law, apprizes them that it is sinful, not only to perjure themselves, but even to swear. To swear in what manner? In vain. But the oaths which are sanctioned in the law he leaves without any objection. They consider themselves as urging a very powerful argument, when they violently insist on the particle *at all*; which, nevertheless, refers not to the word *swear*, but to the forms of oaths that are there subjoined. For the error there condemned consisted, partly, in a supposition that in swearing by heaven and earth, there was no interference with the name of God. Therefore, after the principal instance of transgression, the Lord goes on to destroy all their subterfuges, that they may not imagine themselves to have escaped by suppressing the name of God, and calling heaven and earth to witness for them. For here, by the way, it must be remarked, that men indirectly swear by God, though his name is not expressed; as when they swear by the light of life, by the bread which they eat, by their

(x) Matt. v. 34.

(y) Exod. xxii. 11.

(z) John x. 30, 18; vii. 16.

baptism, or by any other blessings which they have received from the Divine munificence. Nor does Christ in that place prohibit them from swearing by heaven, and earth, and Jerusalem, in order to correct superstition, as some falsely imagine; but rather to confute the sophistical subtlety of persons who thought there was no crime in the foolish use of indirect oaths, as though they were not chargeable with profaning the sacred name of God, which is engraven, however, on all his benefits. But the case is different, where any mortal man, or one that is dead, or an angel, is substituted in the place of God; as, among idolatrous nations, adulation invented that odious form of swearing by the life or genius of a king; because in such cases the deification of a creature obscures and diminishes the glory of the only true God. But when we mean nothing but to derive a confirmation to our assertions from the sacred name of God, although it be done in an indirect manner, yet all such frivolous oaths are offensive to his majesty. Christ deprives this licentious practice of every vain excuse, by his prohibition of swearing at all. James also aims at the same point, (a) where he uses the language of Christ, which I have cited; because this presumption has always been prevalent in the world, notwithstanding it is a profanation of the name of God. For if you refer the particle *at all* to the substance of swearing, as though every oath, without exception, were unlawful, what means the explanation which is immediately annexed, "Neither by heaven, neither by earth," &c., language evidently used in refutation of those cavils, which the Jews considered as furnishing an excuse for their sin.

XXVII. It can no longer be doubtful, therefore, to persons of sound judgment, that the Lord, in that passage, only condemns those oaths which had been forbidden by the law. For even he, who exhibited in his life an example of the perfection which he inculcated, hesitated not to make use of oaths whenever occasion required; and his disciples, who, we doubt not, were obedient to their master in all things, followed the same example. Who can dare to assert, that Paul would have sworn, if all oaths had been prohibited? But when the occasion requires it, he swears without any scruple, and sometimes even adds an imprecation. The question, however, is not yet decided; for it is the opinion of some persons, that public oaths are the only exceptions from this prohibition; such as we take when required by a magistrate; such also as princes are accustomed to use in ratifying treaties; or subjects, when they swear allegiance to their princes; or soldiers, as a military test; and others of a similar kind. To this class also they

(a) James v. 12.

justly refer those oaths which we find used by Paul in assertion of the dignity of the gospel; because the Apostles, in the exercise of their functions, were not private persons, but public ministers of God. And indeed I will not deny that these are the safest oaths; because they are sanctioned by the strongest testimonies of Scripture. A magistrate is directed, in a dubious case, to put a witness to his oath, and the witness, on the other hand, is required to answer on his oath; and the Apostle says, that human controversies are adjusted by this expedient. (*b*) In this precept both parties are furnished with a complete justification of their conduct. Moreover we may observe, that among the ancient heathen a public and solemn oath was held in great reverence; but that common ones, which they used in their ordinary intercourse, were not esteemed of any, or of much importance, because they imagined that these were not regarded by the Divine majesty. But it would be too dangerous to condemn private oaths, which are taken, in cases of necessity, with sobriety, integrity, and reverence, since they are supported both by reason and by scriptural examples. For if it be lawful for private persons in an important and serious affair to appeal to God as a judge between them, much more must it be allowable to invoke him as a witness. Your brother will accuse you of perfidy; you endeavour to exculpate yourself; he will not permit himself by any means to be satisfied. If your reputation be endangered by his obstinate malignity, you may, without any offence, appeal to the judgment of God, that in his own time he will manifest your innocence. If the words be strictly examined, it is a less thing to appeal to him as a witness than as a judge. I see not, therefore, why we should assert such an appeal to him to be unlawful. There are not wanting numerous examples of it. If the oath of Abraham and Isaac with Abimelech be alleged to have been taken in a public capacity, certainly Jacob and Laban were private persons, and yet they confirmed the covenant between them by a mutual oath. (*c*) Boaz was a private person, who confirmed in the same manner his promise of marriage to Ruth. (*d*) Obadiah was a private person, a righteous man, and one that feared the Lord, who declared with an oath the fact of which he wished to convince Elijah. (*e*) I can find, therefore, no better rule, than that we regulate our oaths in such a manner, that they be not rash or inconsiderate, wanton or frivolous, but used in cases of real necessity, as for vindicating the glory of the Lord, or promoting the edification of our brother; which is the end of this commandment of the law.

(*b*) Heb. vi. 16.(*c*) Gen. xxi. 24; xxvi. 31; xxxi. 53.(*d*) Ruth iii. 13.(*e*) 1 Kings xviii. 10.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work ; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God ; in it thou shalt not do any work, &c.

XXVIII. The end of this precept is, that, being dead to our own affections and works, we should meditate on the kingdom of God, and be exercised in that meditation in the observance of his institutions. But, as it has an aspect peculiar and distinct from the others, it requires a little different kind of exposition. The fathers frequently call it a *shadowy commandment*, because it contains the external observance of the day, which was abolished with the rest of the figures at the advent of Christ. And there is much truth in their observation ; but it reaches only half of the subject. Wherefore it is necessary to seek further for an exposition, and to consider three causes, on which I think I have observed this commandment to rest. For it was the design of the heavenly Lawgiver, under the rest of the seventh day, to give the people of Israel a figure of the spiritual rest, by which the faithful ought to refrain from their own works, in order to leave God to work within them. His design was, secondly, that there should be a stated day, on which they might assemble together to hear the law and perform the ceremonies, or at least which they might especially devote to meditations on his works ; that by this recollection they might be led to the exercises of piety. Thirdly, he thought it right that servants, and persons living under the jurisdiction of others, should be indulged with a day of rest, that they might enjoy some remission from their labour.

XXIX. Yet we are taught in many places that this adumbration of the spiritual rest was the principal design of the sabbath. For the Lord is hardly so strict in his requisitions of obedience to any other precept. (*f*) When he means to intimate, in the Prophets, that religion is totally subverted, he complains that his sabbaths are polluted, violated, neglected, and profaned ; (*g*) as though, in case of that duty being neglected, there remained no other way in which he could be honoured. On the other hand, he notices the observance of it with singular encomiums. Wherefore also, among the other Divine communications, the faithful used very highly to esteem the revelation of the sabbath. For this is the language of the Levites in a solemn assembly, recorded by Nehemiah : “ Thou

(*f*) Numb. xiii. 22. Ezek. xx. 12 ; xxii. 8 ; xxiii. 38.

(*g*) Jer. xvii. 21, 22, 27. Isaiah lvi. 2.

madest known unto our fathers thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses." (*h*) We see the singular estimation in which it is held above all the commandments of the law. All these things tend to display the dignity of the mystery, which is beautifully expressed by Moses and Ezekiel. In Exodus we read as follows: "Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you. The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." (*i*) This is more fully expressed by Ezekiel; but the substance of what he says is, that the sabbath was a sign by which the Israelites might know that God was their sanctifier. (*k*) If our sanctification consists properly in the mortification of our own will, there is a very natural analogy between the external sign and the internal thing which it represents. We must rest altogether, that God may operate within us; we must recede from our own will, resign our own heart, and renounce all our carnal affections; in short, we must cease from all the efforts of our own understanding, that having God operating within us, we may enjoy rest in him, as we are also taught by the Apostle. (*l*)

XXX. This perpetual cessation was represented to the Jews by the observance of one day in seven, which the Lord, in order that it might be the more religiously kept, recommended by his own example. For it is no small stimulus to any action, for a man to know that he is imitating his Creator. If any one inquire after a hidden signification in the septenary number, it is probable, that because in Scripture it is the number of perfection, it is here selected to denote perpetual duration. This is confirmed also by the circumstance, that Moses, with that day in which he narrates that the Lord rested from his works, concludes his description of the succession of days and nights. We may also adduce another probable conjecture respecting this number—that the Lord intended to signify that the sabbath would never be completed until the arrival of the last day. For in it we begin that blessed rest, in which we make new advances from day to day. But because we are still engaged in a perpetual warfare with the flesh, it will not be consummated before the completion of that prediction of Isaiah, "It shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all

(*h*) Neh. ix. 14.(*i*) Exod. xxxi. 13, 14, 16, 17.(*k*) Ezek. xx. 12.(*l*) Heb. iv. 9.

flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord ;" (*m*) that is, when God shall be "all in all." (*n*) The Lord may be considered, therefore, as having delineated to his people, in the seventh day, the future perfection of his sabbath in the last day, that, by a continual meditation on the sabbath during their whole life, they might be aspiring towards this perfection.

XXXI. If any one disapprove of this observation on the number, as too curious, I object not to its being understood in a more simple manner ; that the Lord ordained a certain day, that the people under the discipline of the law might be exercised in continual meditations on the spiritual rest ; that he appointed the seventh day, either because he foresaw it would be sufficient, or in order that the proposal of a resemblance to his own example might operate as a stronger stimulus to the people, or at least to apprize them that the only end of the sabbath was to promote their conformity to their Creator. For this is of little importance, provided we retain the mystery, which is principally exhibited, of a perpetual rest from our own works. To the contemplation of this, the Prophets used frequently to recall the Jews, that they might not suppose themselves to have discharged their duty merely by a cessation from manual labours. Beside the passages already cited, we have the following in Isaiah : "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day ; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable ; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words ; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord," &c. (*o*) But all that it contained of a ceremonial nature was without doubt abolished by the advent of the Lord Christ. For he is the truth, at whose presence all figures disappear ; the body, at the sight of which all the shadows are relinquished. He, I say, is the true fulfilment of the sabbath. Having been "buried with him by baptism, we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, that being partakers of his resurrection, we may walk in newness of life." (*p*) Therefore the Apostle says in another place, that "the sabbath was a shadow of things to come ; but the *body* is of Christ ;" (*q*) that is, the real substance of the truth, which he has beautifully explained in that passage. This is contained not in one day, but in the whole course of our life, till, being wholly dead to ourselves, we be filled with the life of God. Christians therefore ought to depart from all superstitious observance of days.

XXXII. As the two latter causes, however, ought not to be

(*m*) Isaiah lxvi. 23.

(*n*) 1 Cor. xv. 28.

(*o*) Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

(*p*) Rom. vi. 4, &c.

(*q*) Col. ii. 16, 17.

numbered among the ancient shadows, but are equally suitable to all ages, — though the sabbath is abrogated, yet it is still customary among us to assemble on stated days for hearing the word, for breaking the mystic bread, and for public prayers; and also to allow servants and labourers a remission from their labour. That in commanding the sabbath, the Lord had regard to both these things, cannot be doubted. The first is abundantly confirmed even by the practice of the Jews. The second is proved by Moses, in Deuteronomy, in these words: “that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt.” (r) Also, in Exodus: “that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.” (s) Who can deny that both these things are as proper for us as for the Jews? Assemblies of the Church are enjoined in the Divine word, and the necessity of them is sufficiently known even from the experience of life. Unless there be stated days appointed for them, how can they be held? According to the direction of the Apostle, “all things” are to “be done decently and in order” among us. (t) But so far is it from being possible to preserve order and decorum without this regulation, that, if it were abolished, the Church would be in imminent danger of immediate convulsion and ruin. But if we feel the same necessity, to relieve which the Lord enjoined the sabbath upon the Jews, let no one plead that it does not belong to us. For our most provident and indulgent Father has been no less attentive to provide for our necessity than for that of the Jews. But why, it may be asked, do we not rather assemble on every day, that so all distinction of days may be removed? I sincerely wish that this were practised; and truly spiritual wisdom would be well worthy of some portion of time being daily allotted to it; but if the infirmity of many persons will not admit of daily assemblies, and charity does not permit us to require more of them, why should we not obey the rule which we have imposed upon us by the will of God?

XXXIII. I am obliged to be rather more diffuse on this point, because, in the present age, some unquiet spirits have been raising noisy contentions respecting the Lord’s day. They complain that Christians are tinctured with Judaism, because they retain any observance of days. But I reply, that the Lord’s day is not observed by us upon the principles of Judaism; because in this respect the difference between us and the Jews is very great. For we celebrate it not with scrupulous rigour, as a ceremony which we conceive to be a

(r) Deut. v. 14, 15.

(s) Exod. xxiii. 12.

(t) I Cor. xiv. 40.

figure of some spiritual mystery, but only use it as a remedy necessary to the preservation of order in the Church. But they say, Paul teaches that Christians are not to be judged in the observance of it, because it is a shadow of something future. (v) Therefore he is "afraid lest" he has "bestowed" on the Galatians "labour in vain," because they continued to "observe days." (w) And in the Epistle to the Romans, he asserts him to be "weak in the faith," who "esteemeth one day above another." (x) But who, these furious zealots only excepted, does not see what observance the apostle intends? For they did not observe them for the sake of political and ecclesiastical order; but when they retained them as shadows of spiritual things, they were so far guilty of obscuring the glory of Christ and the light of the gospel. They did not, therefore, rest from their manual labours, as from employments which would divert them from sacred studies and meditations; but from a principle of superstition, imagining their cessation from labour to be still an expression of reverence for the mysteries formerly represented by it. This preposterous distinction of days the Apostle strenuously opposes; and not that legitimate difference which promotes the peace of the Christian Church. For in the churches which he founded, the sabbath was retained for this purpose. He prescribes the same day to the Corinthians, for making collections for the relief of the brethren at Jerusalem. If superstition be an object of fear, there was more danger in the holy days of the Jews, than in the Lord's days now observed by Christians. Now, whereas it was expedient for the destruction of superstition, the day which the Jews kept holy was abolished; and it being necessary for the preservation of decorum, order, and peace, in the Christian Church, another day was appointed for the same use.

XXXIV. However, the ancients have not without sufficient reason substituted what we call the Lord's day in the room of the sabbath. For since the resurrection of the Lord is the end and consummation of that true rest, which was adumbrated by the ancient sabbath, the same day which put an end to the shadows, admonishes Christians not to adhere to a shadowy ceremony. Yet I do not lay so much stress on the septenary number, that I would oblige the Church to an invariable adherence to it; nor will I condemn those churches which have other solemn days for their assemblies, provided they keep at a distance from superstition. And this will be the case, if they be only designed for the observance of discipline and well-regulated order. Let us sum up the whole in the following manner: As the truth was delivered to the Jews under a figure, so

(v) Col. ii. 16, 17.

(w) Gal. iv. 10, 11.

(x) Rom. xiv. 5.

it is given to us without any shadows ; first, in order that during our whole life we should meditate on a perpetual rest from our own works, that the Lord may operate within us by his Spirit ; secondly, that every man, whenever he has leisure, should diligently exercise himself in private in pious reflections on the works of God, and also that we should at the same time observe the legitimate order of the Church, appointed for the hearing of the word, for the administration of the sacraments, and for public prayer ; thirdly, that we should not unkindly oppress those who are subject to us. Thus vanish all the dreams of false prophets, who in past ages have infected the people with a Jewish notion, affirming that nothing but the ceremonial part of this commandment, which, according to them, is the appointment of the seventh day, has been abrogated, but that the moral part of it, that is, the observance of one day in seven, still remains. But this is only changing the day in contempt of the Jews, while they retain the same opinion of the holiness of a day ; for on this principle the same mysterious signification would still be attributed to particular days, which they formerly obtained among the Jews. And indeed we see what advantages have arisen from such a sentiment. For those who adhere to it, far exceed the Jews in a gross, carnal, and superstitious observance of the sabbath ; so that the reproofs, which we find in Isaiah, are equally applicable to them in the present age, as to those whom the Prophet reprov'd in his time. But the principal thing to be remembered is the general doctrine ; that, lest religion decay or languish among us, sacred assemblies ought diligently to be held, and that we ought to use those external means which are adapted to support the worship of God.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Honour thy father and thy mother ; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

XXXV. The end of this precept is, that since the Lord God desires the preservation of the order he has appointed, the degrees of preëminence fixed by him ought to be inviolably preserved. The sum of it, therefore, will be, that we should reverence them whom God has exalted to any authority over us, and should render them honour, obedience, and gratitude. Whence follows a prohibition to derogate from their dignity by contempt, obstinacy, or ingratitude. For in the Scripture the word "honour" has an extensive signification ; as, when the Apostle directs that "the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour," (y) he means not only that they

(y) 1 Tim. v. 17.

are entitled to reverence, but likewise such a remuneration as their ministry deserves. But as this precept, which enjoins subjection to superiors, is exceedingly repugnant to the depravity of human nature, whose ardent desire of exaltation will scarcely admit of subjection, it has therefore proposed as an example that kind of superiority which is naturally most amiable and least invidious ; because that might the more easily mollify and incline our minds to a habit of submission. By that subjection, therefore, which is most easy to be borne, the Lord accustoms us by degrees to every kind of legitimate obedience ; because the reason of all is the same. For to those, to whom he gives any preëminence, he communicates his own authority, as far as is necessary for the preservation of that preëminence. The titles of Father, God, and Lord, are so eminently applicable to him, that, whenever we hear either of them mentioned, our minds cannot but be strongly affected with a sense of his majesty. Those, therefore, on whom he bestows these titles, he illuminates with a ray of his splendour, to render them all honourable in their respective stations. Thus in a father we ought to recognize something Divine ; for it is not without reason that he bears one of the titles of the Deity. Our prince, or our lord, enjoys an honour somewhat similar to that which is given to God.

XXXVI. Wherefore it ought not to be doubted that God here lays down a universal rule for our conduct ; namely, that to every one, whom we know to be placed in authority over us by his appointment, we should render reverence, obedience, gratitude, and all the other services in our power. Nor does it make any difference, whether they are worthy of this honour, or not. For whatever be their characters, yet it is not without the appointment of the Divine providence, that they have attained that station, on account of which the supreme Legislator has commanded them to be honoured. He has particularly enjoined reverence to our parents, who have brought us into this life ; which nature itself ought to teach us. For those who violate the parental authority by contempt or rebellion, are not men, but monsters. Therefore the Lord commands all those, who are disobedient to their parents, to be put to death, as having rendered themselves unworthy to enjoy the light, by their disregard of those by whose means they were introduced to it. And various appendices to the law evince the truth of our observation, that the honour here intended consists in reverence, obedience, and gratitude. The first the Lord confirms, when he commands him to be slain who has cursed his father or mother ; (z) for in that case he punishes contempt. He confirms the second, when he denounces the punishment

of death against disobedient and rebellious children. (a) The third is supported by Christ, who says, "God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother;" and, "He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." (b) And whenever Paul mentions this commandment, he explains it as a requisition of obedience. (c)

XXXVII. In order to recommend it, a promise is annexed, which is a further intimation how acceptable to God that submission is which is here enjoined. Paul employs that stimulus to arouse our inattention, when he says, "This is the first commandment with promise." For the preceding promise, in the first table, was not particularly confined to one commandment, but extended to the whole law. Now, the true explanation of this promise is, that the Lord spake particularly to the Israelites concerning the land which he had promised them as an inheritance. If the possession of that land therefore was a pledge of the Divine goodness, we need not wonder, if it was the Lord's will to manifest his favour by bestowing length of life, in order to prolong the enjoyment of the blessing conferred by him. The meaning of it therefore is, Honour thy father and thy mother, that through the space of a long life thou mayest enjoy the possession of the land, which will be to thee a testimony of my favour. But, as the whole earth is blessed to the faithful, we justly place the present life among the blessings we receive from God. Wherefore this promise belongs likewise to us, inasmuch as the continuance of the present life affords us a proof of the Divine benevolence. For neither is it promised to us, nor was it promised to the Jews, as though it contained any blessedness in itself; but because to the pious it is generally a token of the Divine favour. Therefore, if a son, that is obedient to his parents, happen to be removed out of life before the age of maturity, — which is a case of frequent occurrence, — the Lord, nevertheless, perseveres with as much punctuality in the completion of his promise, as if he were to reward a person with a hundred acres of land to whom he had only promised one. The whole consists in this: We should consider that long life is promised to us so far as it is the blessing of God; but that it is a blessing, only as it is a proof of the favour of God, which he infinitely more richly and substantially testifies and actually demonstrates to his servants in their death.

(a) Deut. xxi. 18—21. (b) Matt. xv. 4—6. (c) Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 20.

XXXVIII. Moreover, when the Lord promises the blessing of the present life to those children who honour their parents with proper reverence, he at the same time implies that a certain curse impends over all those who are disobedient and perverse. And that it might not fail of being executed, he pronounces them in his law to be liable to the sentence of death, and commands that punishment to be inflicted on them. If they escape that, he punishes them himself in some other way. For we see what great numbers of persons of this character fall in battles and in private quarrels; others are afflicted in unusual ways; and almost all of them are proofs of the truth of this threatening. But if any arrive at an extreme age, being deprived of the Divine blessing, they only languish in misery in this life, and are reserved to greater punishments hereafter; and consequently they are far from participating in the blessing promised to dutiful children. But it must be remarked by the way, that we are commanded to obey them only "in the Lord;" and this is evident from the foundation before laid; for they preside in that station to which the Lord has exalted them by communicating to them a portion of his honour. Wherefore the submission exercised towards them ought to be a step towards honouring the Supreme Father. Therefore, if they instigate us to any transgression of the law, we may justly consider them not as parents, but as strangers, who attempt to seduce us from obedience to our real Father. The same observation is applicable to princes, lords, and superiors of every description. For it is infamous and absurd, that their eminence should avail to depreciate the preëminence of God, upon which it depends, and to which it ought to conduct us.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.

XXXIX. The end of this precept is, that since God has connected mankind together in a kind of unity, every man ought to consider himself as charged with the safety of all. In short, then, all violence and injustice, and every kind of mischief, which may injure the body of our neighbour, are forbidden to us. And therefore we are enjoined, if it be in our power, to assist in protecting the lives of our neighbours; to exert ourselves with fidelity for this purpose; to procure those things which conduce to their tranquillity; to be vigilant in shielding them from injuries; and in cases of danger to afford them our assistance. If we remember that this is the language of the Divine Legislator, we should consider, at the same time, that he intends this rule to govern the soul. For it were

ridiculous, that he who beholds the thoughts of the heart, and principally insists on them, should content himself with forming only the body to true righteousness. Mental homicide, therefore, is likewise prohibited, and an internal disposition to preserve the life of our brother is commanded in this law. The hand, indeed, accomplishes the homicide, but it is conceived by the mind under the influence of anger and hatred. Examine whether you can be angry with your brother, without being inflamed with a desire of doing him some injury. If you cannot be angry with him, then you cannot hate him; for hatred is nothing more than inveterate anger. However you may dissemble, and endeavour to extricate yourself by vain subterfuges, whenever there is either anger or hatred, there is also a disposition to do injury. If you persist in your evasions, it is already pronounced by the Holy Spirit, that "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." (d) It is declared by the Lord Christ, "that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (e)

XL. Now, the Scripture states two reasons on which this precept is founded; the first, that man is the image of God; the second, that he is our own flesh. Wherefore, unless we would violate the image of God, we ought to hold the personal safety of our neighbour inviolably sacred; and unless we would divest ourselves of humanity, we ought to cherish him as our own flesh. The motives which are derived from the redemption and grace of Christ will be treated in another place. These two characters, which are inseparable from the nature of man, God requires us to consider as motives to our exertions for his security; so that we may reverence his image impressed on him, and show an affectionate regard for our own flesh. That person, therefore, is not innocent of the crime of murder, who has merely restrained himself from the effusion of blood. If you perpetrate, if you attempt, if you only conceive in your mind any thing inimical to the safety of another, you stand guilty of murder. Unless you also endeavour to defend him to the utmost of your ability and opportunity, you are guilty of the same inhuman transgression of the law. But if so much concern be discovered for the safety of the body, we may conclude, how much care and attention should be devoted to the safety of the soul, which, in the sight of God, is of infinitely superior value.

(d) 1 John iii. 15.

(e) Matt. v. 22.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

XLI. The end of this precept is, that because God loves chastity and purity, we ought to depart from all uncleanness. The sum of it therefore is, that we ought not to be polluted by any carnal impurity, or libidinous intemperance. To this prohibition corresponds the affirmative injunction, that every part of our lives ought to be regulated by chastity and continence. But he expressly forbids adultery, to which all incontinence tends; in order that by the turpitude of that which is very gross and palpable, being an infamous pollution of the body, he may lead us to abominate every unlawful passion. Since man was created in such a state as not to live a solitary life, but to be united to a help-meet; and moreover since the curse of sin has increased this necessity, — the Lord has afforded us ample assistance in this case by the institution of marriage — a connection which he has not only originated by his authority, but also sanctified by his blessing. Whence it appears, that every other union, but that of marriage, is cursed in his sight; and that the conjugal union itself is appointed as a remedy for our necessity, that we may not break out into unrestrained licentiousness. Let us not flatter ourselves, therefore, since we hear that there can be no cohabitation of male and female, except in marriage, without the curse of God.

XLII. Now, since the original constitution of human nature, and the violence of the passions consequent upon the fall, have rendered a union of the sexes doubly necessary, except to those whom God has exempted from that necessity by peculiar grace, let every one carefully examine what is given to him. Virginity, I acknowledge, is a virtue not to be despised. But as this is denied to some, and to others is granted only for a season, let those who are troubled with incontinence, and cannot succeed in resisting it, avail themselves of the help of marriage, that they may preserve their chastity according to the degree of their calling. For persons who “cannot receive this saying,” (f) if they do not assist their frailty by the remedy offered and granted to them, oppose God and resist his ordinance. Here let no one object, as many do in the present day, that with the help of God he can do all things. For the assistance of God is granted only to them who walk in his ways, that is, in their calling; which is deserted by all those who neglect the means which God has afforded them, and strive to over-

(f) Matt. xix. 11.

come their necessities by vain presumption. That continence is a peculiar gift of God, and of that kind which is not imparted promiscuously, or to the whole body of the Church, but only conferred on a few of its members, is affirmed by our Lord. For he mentions a certain class of men who "have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake;" (*g*) that is, that they might be more at liberty to devote their attention to the affairs of the kingdom of heaven. But that no one might suppose this to be in the power of man, he had already declared that "all men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." And he concludes, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." Paul is still more explicit, when he says, that "every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." (*h*)

XLIII. Since we are so expressly apprized that it is not in the power of every one to preserve chastity in celibacy, even with the most strenuous efforts for that purpose, and that it is a peculiar grace, which the Lord confers only on particular persons, that he may have them more ready for his service, do we not resist God, and strive against the nature instituted by him, unless we accommodate our manner of life to the measure of our ability? In this commandment the Lord prohibits adultery: therefore he requires of us purity and chastity. The only way of preserving this is, that every one should measure himself by his own capacity. Let no one rashly despise marriage as a thing useless or unnecessary to him; let no one prefer celibacy, unless he can dispense with a wife. And in that state let him not consult his carnal tranquillity or advantage, but only that, being exempted from this restraint, he may be the more prompt and ready for all the duties of piety. Moreover, as this benefit is conferred upon many persons only for a season, let every one refrain from marriage as long as he shall be capable of supporting a life of celibacy. When his strength fails to overcome his passions, let him consider that the Lord has laid him under a necessity of marrying. This is evident from the direction of the Apostle: "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Again: "If they cannot contain, let them marry." (*i*) Here, in the first place, he signifies that the majority of men are subject to the vice of incontinence; in the next place, of those who are subject to it, he makes no exception, but enjoins them all to have recourse to that sole remedy which obviates unchastity. Those who are incontinent, therefore, if they neglect this method of curing their infirmity, are guilty of sin, in not obeying this injunction of the Apostle. And let not him who refrains from actual for-

(*g*) Matt. xix. 12.(*h*) 1 Cor. vii. 7.(*i*) 1 Cor. vii. 2, 9.

nication, flatter himself, as though he could not be charged with unchastity, while his heart at the same time is inflamed with libidinous desire. For Paul defines chastity to consist in sanctity of mind connected with purity of body. "The unmarried woman," he says, "careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit." (k) Therefore, when he gives a reason to confirm the preceding injunction, he does not content himself with saying that it is better for a man to marry than to pollute himself with the society of a harlot, but affirms that "it is better to marry than to burn." (l)

XLIV. Now, if married persons are satisfied that their society is attended with the blessing of the Lord, they are thereby admonished that it must not be contaminated by libidinous and dissolute intemperance. For if the honour of marriage conceals the shame of incontinence, it ought not on that account to be made an incitement to it. Wherefore let it not be supposed by married persons that all things are lawful to them. Every man should observe sobriety towards his wife, and every wife, reciprocally, towards her husband; conducting themselves in such a manner as to do nothing unbecoming the decorum and temperance of marriage. For thus ought marriage contracted in the Lord to be regulated by moderation and modesty, and not to break out into the vilest lasciviousness. Such sensuality has been stigmatized by Ambrose with a severe, but not unmerited censure, when he calls those who in their conjugal intercourse have no regard to modesty or decorum, the adulterers of their own wives. Lastly, let us consider who the Legislator is, by whom adultery is here condemned. It is no other than he who ought to have the entire possession of us, and justly requires the whole of our spirit, soul, and body. Therefore, when he prohibits us from committing adultery, he at the same time forbids us, either by lasciviously ornamenting our persons, or by obscene gesticulations, or by impure expressions, insidiously to attack the chastity of others. For there is much reason in the address of Archelaus to a young man clothed in an immoderately effeminate and delicate manner, that it was immaterial in what part he was immodest, with respect to God, who abominates all contamination, in whatever part it may discover itself, either of soul or of body. And that there may be no doubt on the subject, let us remember that God here recommends chastity. If the Lord requires chastity of us, he condemns every thing contrary to it. Wherefore, if we aspire to obedience, neither let our mind internally burn with depraved concupiscence, nor let our eyes wanton into corrupt affections.

(k) 1 Cor. vii. 34.

(l) 1 Cor. vii. 9.

nor let our body be adorned for purposes of seduction, nor let our tongue with impure speeches allure our mind to similar thoughts, nor let us inflame ourselves with intemperance. For all these vices are stains, by which the purity of chastity is defiled.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not steal.

XLV. The end of this precept is, that, as injustice is an abomination to God, every man may possess what belongs to him. The sum of it, then, is, that we are forbidden to covet the property of others, and are therefore enjoined faithfully to use our endeavours to preserve to every man what justly belongs to him. For we ought to consider, that what a man possesses has fallen to his lot, not by a fortuitous contingency, but by the distribution of the supreme Lord of all ; and that therefore no man can be deprived of his possessions by criminal methods, without an injury being done to the Divine dispenser of them. But the species of theft are numerous. One consists in violence ; when the property of any person is plundered by force and predatory license. Another consists in malicious imposture ; when it is taken away in a fraudulent manner. Another consists in more secret cunning ; where any one is deprived of his property under the mask of justice. Another consists in flatteries ; where we are cheated under the pretence of a donation. But not to dwell too long on the recital of the different species of theft, let us remember that all artifices by which the possessions and wealth of our neighbours are transferred to us, whenever they deviate from sincere love into a desire of deceiving, or doing any kind of injury, are to be esteemed acts of theft. This is the only view in which God considers them, even though the property may be gained by a suit at law. For he sees the tedious manœuvres with which the designing man begins to decoy his more simple neighbour, till at length he entangles him in his snares. He sees the cruel and inhuman laws, by which the more powerful man oppresses and ruins him that is weaker. He sees the baits with which the more crafty trepan the imprudent. All which things are concealed from the judgment of man, nor ever come to his knowledge. And this kind of injury relates not only to money, or to goods, or to lands, but to whatever each individual is justly entitled to ; for we defraud our neighbours of their property, if we deny them those kind offices, which it is our duty to perform to them. If an idle agent or steward devour the substance of his master, and be inattentive to the care of his domestic af-

fairs ; if he either improperly waste, or squander with a luxurious profusion, the property intrusted to him ; if a servant deride his master, if he divulge his secrets, if by any means he betray either his life or his property ; and if, on the other hand, a master inhumanly oppress his family, — God holds him guilty of theft. For the property of others is withheld and misapplied by him, who does not perform towards them those offices which the duty of his situation requires of him.

XLVI. We shall rightly obey this commandment therefore, if, contented with our own lot, we seek no gain but in an honest and lawful way ; if we neither desire to enrich ourselves by injustice, nor attempt to ruin the fortune of our neighbour, in order to increase our own ; if we do not labour to accumulate wealth by cruelty, and at the expense of the blood of others ; if we do not greedily scrape together from every quarter, regardless of right or wrong, whatever may conduce to satiate our avarice or support our prodigality. On the contrary, it should be our constant aim, as far as possible, faithfully to assist all by our advice and our property in preserving what belongs to them ; but if we are concerned with perfidious and fallacious men, let us be prepared rather to recede a little from our just right than to contend with them. Moreover, let us communicate to the necessities, and according to our ability alleviate the poverty, of those whom we perceive to be pressed by any embarrassment of their circumstances. Lastly, let every man examine what obligations his duty lays him under to others, and let him faithfully discharge the duties which he owes them. For this reason the people should honour their governors, patiently submit to their authority, obey their laws and mandates, and resist nothing, to which they can submit consistently with the Divine will. On the other hand, let governors take care of their people, preserve the public peace, protect the good, punish the wicked, and administer all things in such a manner, as becomes those who must render an account of their office to God the supreme Judge. Let the ministers of churches faithfully devote themselves to the ministry of the word, and let them never adulterate the doctrine of salvation, but deliver it pure and uncontaminated to the people of God. Let them teach, not only by their doctrine, but by the example of their lives ; in a word, let them preside as good shepherds over the sheep. Let the people, on their part, receive them as the messengers and apostles of God, render to them that honour to which the supreme Master has exalted them, and furnish them with the necessaries of life. Let parents undertake the support, government, and instruction of their children, as committed by God to their care ; nor let them exasperate their minds and alienate their affections from

them by cruelty, but cherish and embrace them with the lenity and indulgence becoming their character. And that obedience is due to them from their children has been before observed. Let juniors revere old age, since the Lord has designed that age to be honourable. Let old men, by their prudence and superior experience, guide the imbecility of youth ; not teasing them with sharp and clamorous invectives, but tempering severity with mildness and affability. Let servants show themselves obedient and diligent in the service of their masters ; and that not only in appearance, but from the heart, as serving God himself. Neither let masters behave morosely and perversely to their servants, harassing them with excessive asperity, or treating them with contempt ; but rather acknowledge them as their brethren and companions in the service of the heavenly Master, entitled to be regarded with mutual affection, and to receive kind treatment. In this manner, I say, let every man consider what duties he owes to his neighbours, according to the relations he sustains ; and those duties let him discharge. Moreover, our attention should always be directed to the Legislator ; to remind us that this law is ordained for our hearts as much as for our hands, in order that men may study both to protect the property and to promote the interests of others.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

XLVII. The end of this precept is, that because God, who is truth itself, execrates a lie, we ought to preserve the truth without the least disguise. The sum of it therefore is, that we neither violate the character of any man, either by calumnies or by false accusations, nor distress him in his property by falsehood, nor injure him by detraction or impertinence. This prohibition is connected with an injunction to do all the service we can to every man, by affirming the truth for the protection of his reputation and his property. The Lord seems to have intended the following words as an exposition of this command : "Thou shalt not raise a false report : put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." Again : "Keep thee far from a false matter." (*m*) In another place also he not only forbids us to practise backbiting and tale-bearing among the people, but prohibits every man from deceiving his brother ; (*n*) for he cautions us against both in distinct commandments. Indeed there is no doubt but that, as, in the preceding precepts, he has prohibited cruelty, impurity, and

(*m*) Exod. xxiii. 1, 7.(*n*) Lev. xix. 16.

avarice, so in this he forbids falsehood ; of which there are two branches, as we have before observed. For either we transgress against the reputation of our neighbours by malignity and perverse detraction, or by falsehood and sometimes by obloquy we injure their interests. It is immaterial whether we suppose the testimony here designed to be solemn and judicial, or a common one, which is delivered in private conversations. For we must always recur to this maxim — that, of each of the separate kinds of vices, one species is proposed as an example, to which the rest may be referred ; and that, in general, the species selected is that in which the turpitude of the vice is most conspicuous. It is proper, however, to extend it more generally to calumnies and detraction, by which our neighbours are unjustly harassed ; because falsehood in a forensic testimony is always attended with perjury. But perjury, being a profanation and violation of the name of God, has already been sufficiently condemned in the third commandment. Wherefore the legitimate observance of this precept is, that our tongue, by asserting the truth, ought to serve both the reputation and the profit of our neighbours. The equity of this is self-evident. For if a good name be more precious than any treasures whatever, a man sustains as great an injury when he is deprived of the integrity of his character, as when he is despoiled of his wealth. And in plundering his substance, there is sometimes as much effected by false testimony, as by the hands of violence.

XLVIII. Nevertheless, it is wonderful with what supine security this precept is generally transgressed, so that few persons can be found, who are not notoriously subject to this malady ; we are so fascinated with the malignant pleasure of examining and detecting the faults of others. Nor should we suppose it to be a sufficient excuse, that in many cases we cannot be charged with falsehood. For he who forbids the character of our brother to be bespattered with falsehood, will also that as far as the truth will permit, it be preserved immaculate. For although he only guards it against falsehood, he thereby suggests that it is committed to his charge. But this should be sufficient to induce us to defend the fair character of our neighbour—that God concerns himself in its protection. Wherefore detraction is, without doubt, universally condemned. Now, by detraction we mean, not reproof, which is given from a motive of correction ; not accusation or judicial denunciation, by which recompense is demanded for an injury ; not public reprehension, which tends to strike terror into other offenders ; not a discovery to them whose safety depends on their being previously warned, that they may not be endangered through ignorance ; but odious crimination,

which arises from malice, and a violent propensity to detraction. This commandment also extends so far as to forbid us to affect a pleasantry tinctured with scurrilous and bitter sarcasms, severely lashing the faults of others under the appearance of sport ; which is the practice of some who aim at the praise of raillery, to the prejudice of the modesty and feelings of others ; for such wantonness sometimes fixes a lasting stigma on the characters of our brethren. Now, if we turn our eyes to the Legislator whose proper right it is to rule our ears and our minds, as much as our tongues, it will certainly appear that an avidity of hearing detraction, and an unreasonable propensity to unfavourable opinions respecting others, are equally prohibited. For it would be ridiculous for any one to suppose that God hates slander in the tongue, and does not reprobate malice in the heart. Wherefore, if we possess the true fear and love of God, let us make it our study, that as far as is practicable and expedient, and consistent with charity, we devote neither our tongues nor our ears to opprobrious and malicious raillery, nor inadvertently attend to unfavourable suspicions ; but that, putting fair constructions on every man's words and actions, we regulate our hearts, our ears, and our tongues, with a view to preserve the reputation of all around us.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

XLIX. The end of this precept is, that, since it is the will of God that our whole soul should be under the influence of love, every desire inconsistent with charity ought to be expelled from our minds. The sum, then, will be, that no thought should obtrude itself upon us, which would excite in our minds any desire that is noxious, and tends to the detriment of another. To which corresponds the affirmative precept, that all our conceptions, deliberations, resolutions, and undertakings, ought to be consistent with the benefit and advantage of our neighbours. But here we meet with what appears to be a great and perplexing difficulty. For if our previous assertions be true, that the terms *adultery* and *theft* comprehend the licentious desire, and the injurious and criminal intention, this may be thought to have superseded the necessity of a separate command being afterwards introduced, forbidding us to covet the possessions of others. But we shall easily solve this difficulty by a distinction between intention and concupiscence. For an

intention, as we have before observed in explaining the former commandments, is a deliberate consent of the will, when the mind has been enslaved by any unlawful desire. Concupiscence may exist without such deliberation or consent, when the mind is only attracted and stimulated by vain and corrupt objects. As the Lord, therefore, has hitherto commanded our wills, efforts, and actions to be subject to the law of love, so now he directs that the conceptions of our minds be subject to the same regulation, lest any of them be corrupt and perverted, and give our hearts an improper impulse. As he has forbidden our minds to be inclined and persuaded to anger, hatred, adultery, rapine, and falsehood, so now he prohibits them from being instigated to these vices.

L. Nor is it without cause that he requires such consummate rectitude. For who can deny that it is reasonable for all the powers of our souls to be under the influence of love? But if any one deviate from the path of love, who can deny that that soul is in an unhealthy state? Now, whence is it, that your mind conceives desires prejudicial to your neighbour, but that, neglecting his interest, you consult nothing but your own? For if your heart were full of love, there would be no part of it exposed to such imaginations. It must therefore be destitute of love, so far as it is the seat of concupiscence. Some one will object, that it is unreasonable, that imaginations, which without reflection flutter about in the mind, and then vanish away, should be condemned as symptoms of concupiscence, which has its seat in the heart. I reply, that the present question relates to that kind of imaginations, which, when they are presented to our understandings, at the same time strike our hearts, and inflame them with cupidity; since the mind never entertains a wish for any thing after which the heart is not excited to pant. Therefore God enjoins a wonderful ardour of love, which he will not allow to be interrupted even by the smallest degree of concupiscence. He requires a heart admirably well regulated, which he permits not to be disturbed with the least emotion contrary to the law of love. Do not imagine that this doctrine is unsupported by any great authority; for I derived the first idea of it from Augustine. Now, though the design of the Lord was to prohibit us from all corrupt desires, yet he has exhibited, as examples, those objects which most generally deceive us with a fallacious appearance of pleasure; that he might not leave any thing to concupiscence, after having driven it from those objects towards which it is most violently inclined. Behold, then, the second table of the law, which sufficiently instructs us in the duties we owe to men for the sake of God, on regard to whom the whole rule of love depends. The duties taught in this

second table, therefore, we shall inculcate in vain, unless our instruction be founded on the fear and reverence of God. To divide the prohibition of concupiscence into two precepts, the discerning reader, without any comment of mine, will pronounce to be a corrupt and violent separation of what is but one. Nor is the repetition of this phrase, "Thou shalt not covet," any objection against us; because, having mentioned the house or family, God enumerates the different parts of it, beginning with the wife. Hence it clearly appears that it ought to be read, as it is correctly read by the Hebrews, in one continued connection; and in short, that God commands, that all that every man possesses remain safe and entire, not only from any actual injury or fraudulent intention, but even from the least emotion of cupidity that can solicit our hearts.

LI. But what is the tendency of the whole law, will not now be difficult to judge: it is to a perfection of righteousness, that it may form the life of man after the example of the Divine purity. For God has so delineated his own character in it, that the man who exemplifies in his actions the precepts it contains, will exhibit in his life, as it were, an image of God. Wherefore, when Moses would recall the substance of it to the remembrance of the Israelites, he said, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord?" (o) Nor did he cease to reiterate the same things to them, whenever he intended to point out the end of the law. The tendency of the doctrine of the law is to connect man with his God, and, as Moses elsewhere expresses it, to make him cleave to the Lord in sanctity of life. (p) Now, the perfection of this sanctity consists in two principal points, already recited — "that we love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves." (q) And the first is, that our souls be completely filled with the love of God. From this the love of our neighbour will naturally follow; as the Apostle signifies, when he says, that "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (r) Here we find a good conscience and faith unfeigned, that is, in a word, true piety, stated to be the grand source from which charity is derived. He is deceived, therefore, who supposes that the law teaches nothing but certain rudiments and first principles of righteousness, by which men are introduced to the commencement, but are not directed to the true goal of good

(o) Dent. x. 12, 13.

(p) Dent. xi. 22.

(q) Luke x. 27.

(r) 1 Tim. i. 5.

works ; since beyond the former sentence of Moses, and the latter of Paul, nothing further can be wanted to the highest perfection. For how far will he wish to proceed, who will not be content with this instruction, by which man is directed to the fear of God, to the spiritual worship of him, to the observance of his commands, to persevering rectitude in the way of the Lord, to purity of conscience, and sincere faith and love ? Hence we derive a confirmation of the foregoing exposition of the law, which traces and finds in its precepts all the duties of piety and love. For they who attend merely to dry and barren elements, as though it taught them but half of the Divine will, are declared by the Apostle to have no knowledge of its end.

LII. But because Christ and his Apostles, in reciting the substance of the law, sometimes omit the first table, (s) many persons are deceived in this point, who wish to extend their expressions to both tables. In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ calls judgment, mercy, and faith, "the weightier matters of the law." By the word *faith* it is evident to me that he intends truth or fidelity towards men. Some, however, in order to extend the passage to the whole law, take the word *faith* to mean religion towards God. But for this there is no foundation ; for Christ is treating of those works by which man ought to prove himself to be righteous. If we attend to this observation, we shall cease also to wonder, why, in another place, to the inquiry of a young man, what those commandments are by the observance of which we enter into life, he only returns the following answer : "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother ; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (t) For obedience to the first table consisted chiefly either in the disposition of the heart, or in ceremonies. The disposition of the heart was not visible, and the ceremonies were diligently performed by hypocrites ; but the works of charity are such as enable us to give a certain evidence of righteousness. But the same occurs in the Prophets so frequently, that it must be familiar to the reader who is but tolerably conversant with them. For in almost all cases when they exhort to repentance, they omit the first table, and insist on faith, judgment, mercy, and equity. Nor do they by this method neglect the fear of God, but require substantial proof of it from those marks. It is well known that when they treat of the observation of the law, they generally insist on the second table ; because it is in it that the love of righteousness and integrity is principally discovered. It is unnecessary to quote the passages, as every person will of himself easily remark what I have stated.

(s) Matt. xxiii. 23.

(t) Matt. xix. 18, 19.

LIII. Is it, then, it will be asked, of more importance towards the attainment of righteousness to live innocently with men, than piously towards God? By no means. But because no man fulfils all the duties of charity, unless he really fear God, we derive from those duties a proof of his piety. Besides, the Lord, well knowing that he can receive no benefit from us, which he also declares by the Psalmist, (*v*) requires not our services for himself, but employs us in good works towards our neighbour. It is not without reason, then, that the Apostle makes all the perfection of the saints to consist in love; (*w*) which in another place he very justly styles "the fulfilling of the law;" adding, that "he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (*x*) Again: that "all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (*y*) For he teaches nothing different from what is taught by Christ himself, when he says, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." (*z*) It is certain that in the law and the prophets, faith, and all that pertains to the legitimate worship of God, hold the principal place, and that love occupies an inferior station; but our Lord intends that the observance of justice and equity among men is only prescribed to us in the law, that our pious fear of him, if we really possess any, may be proved by our actions.

LIV. Here, then, we must rest, that our life will then be governed according to the will of God, and the prescriptions of his law, when it is in all respects most beneficial to our brethren. But we do not find in the whole law one syllable, that lays down any rule for a man respecting those things which he should practise or omit for his carnal convenience. And surely, since men are born in such a state, that they are entirely governed by an immoderate self-love, — a passion which, how great soever their departure from the truth, they always retain, — there was no need of a law which would inflame that love, already of itself too violent. Whence it plainly appears, that the observance of the commandments consists not in the love of ourselves, but in the love of God and of our neighbour; that his is the best and most holy life, who lives as little as possible to himself; and that no man leads a worse or more iniquitous life, than he who lives exclusively to himself, and makes his own interest the sole object of his thoughts and pursuits. Moreover, the Lord, in order to give us the best expression of the strength of that love which we ought to exercise towards our neighbours, has regulated it by the standard of our self-love, because there was no stronger or more vehement af-

(*v*) Psalm xvi. 2.(*w*) Ephes. iii. 17.(*z*) Rom. xiii. 8.(*y*) Gal. v. 14.(*x*) Matt. vii. 12.

fection. And the force of the expression must be carefully examined; for he does not, according to the foolish dreams of some sophists, concede the first place to self-love, and assign the second to the love of our neighbour; but rather transfers to others that affection of love which we naturally restrict to ourselves. Whence the Apostle asserts that "charity seeketh not her own." (a) Nor is their argument, that every thing regulated by any standard is inferior to the standard by which it is regulated, worthy of the least attention. For God does not appoint our self-love as the rule, to which our love to others should be subordinate; but whereas, through our natural depravity, our love used to terminate in ourselves, he shows that it ought now to be diffused abroad; that we may be ready to do any service to our neighbour with as much alacrity, ardour, and solicitude, as to ourselves.

LV. Now, since Christ has demonstrated, in the parable of the Samaritan, that the word "neighbour" comprehends every man, even the greatest stranger, we have no reason to limit the commandment of love to our own relations or friends. I do not deny, that the more closely any person is united to us, the greater claim he has to the assistance of our kind offices. For the condition of humanity requires, that men should perform more acts of kindness to each other, in proportion to the closeness of the bonds by which they are connected, whether of relationship, or acquaintance, or vicinity; and this without any offence to God, by whose providence we are constrained to it. But I assert, that the whole human race, without any exception, should be comprehended in the same affection of love, and that in this respect there is no difference between the barbarian and the Grecian, the worthy and unworthy, the friend and the foe; for they are to be considered in God, and not in themselves, and whenever we deviate from this view of the subject, it is no wonder if we fall into many errors. Wherefore, if we wish to adhere to the true law of love, our eyes must chiefly be directed, not to man, the prospect of whom would impress us with hatred more frequently than with love, but to God, who commands that our love to him be diffused among all mankind; so that this must always be a fundamental maxim with us, that whatever be the character of a man, yet we ought to love him because we love God.

LVI. Wherefore the schoolmen have discovered either their ignorance or their wickedness in a most pestilent manner, when, treating of the precepts prohibiting the desire of revenge, and enjoining the love of our enemies, which were anciently delivered to all the Jews, and afterwards equally to all

(a) 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

Christians, they have made them to be counsels which we are at liberty to obey or not to obey, and have confined the necessary observance of them to the monks, who, on account of this very circumstance, would be more righteous than plain Christians, because they voluntarily bound themselves to observe these counsels. The reason which they assign for not receiving them as laws, is, that they appear too burdensome and grievous, especially to Christians who are under the law of grace. Do they presume in this manner to disannul the eternal law of God respecting the love of our neighbour? Is such a distinction to be found in any page of the law? On the contrary, does it not abound with commandments most strictly enjoining the love of our enemies? For what is the meaning of the injunction to feed our neighbour when he is hungry? (*b*) to direct into the right way his oxen or his asses when they are going astray, and to help them when sinking under a burden? (*c*) Shall we do good to his cattle for his sake, and feel no benevolence to his person? What! is not the word of the Lord eternal? "Vengeance is mine, I will repay:" (*d*) which is expressed in another passage still more explicitly: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people." (*e*) Let them either obliterate these passages from the law, or acknowledge that the Lord was a Legislator, and no longer falsely pretend that he was only a counsellor.

LVII. And what is the meaning of the following expressions, which they have presumed to abuse by the absurdity of their comment? "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." (*f*) Here, who would not argue with Chrysostom, that the allegation of such a necessary cause clearly proves these to be, not exhortations, but commandments? What have we left us, after being expunged from the number of the children of God? But according to them, the monks will be the only sons of the heavenly Father; they alone will venture to invoke God as their Father. What will now become of the Church? Upon the same principle it will be confined to heathen and publicans. For Christ says, "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (*g*) Shall not we be in a happy situation, if they leave us the title of Christians, but deprive us of the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven? The argument of Augustine is equally strong. When the Lord, says he, prohibits adultery, he forbids you to violate the

(*b*) Prov. xxv. 21.(*c*) Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.(*d*) Rom. xii. 19.(*e*) Lev. xix. 18.(*f*) Matt. v. 44, 45.(*g*) Matt. v. 46.

wife of your enemy no less than of your friend : when he prohibits theft, he permits you not to steal from any one, whether he be a friend or an enemy. Now, Paul reduces these two prohibitions of theft and adultery to the rule of love, and even teaches that they are "briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (*h*) Either, then, Paul must have been an erroneous expositor of the law, or it necessarily follows from this, that we are commanded to love, not only our friends, but also our enemies. Those, therefore, who so licentiously shake off the yoke common to the children of God, evidently betray themselves to be the sons of Satan. It is doubtful whether they have discovered greater stupidity or impudence in the publication of this dogma. For all the fathers decidedly pronounce that these are mere precepts. That no doubt was entertained on the subject in the time of Gregory, appears from his positive assertions ; for he treats them as precepts, as though it had never been controverted. And how foolishly do they argue ! They would be a burden, say they, too grievous for Christians ; as though truly any thing could be conceived more difficult, than to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. Compared with this law, every thing must be accounted easy, whether it be to love an enemy, or to banish from the mind all desire of revenge. To our imbecility, indeed, every thing is arduous and difficult, even the smallest point in the law. It is the Lord in whom we find strength : let him give what he commands, and let him command what he pleases. The being Christians under the law of grace consists not in unbounded license uncontrolled by any law, but in being ingrafted into Christ, by whose grace they are delivered from the curse of the law, and by whose Spirit they have the law inscribed on their hearts. This grace Paul has figuratively denominated a law, in allusion to the law of God, to which he was comparing and contrasting it. Their dispute concerning the word *law* is a dispute about nothing.

LVIII. Of the same nature is what they have called venial sin — a term which they apply to secret impiety, which is a breach of the first table, and to the direct transgression of the last commandment. For this is their definition, that "it is evil desire without any deliberate assent, and without any long continuance in the heart." Now, I assert that evil desire cannot enter the heart, except through a deficiency of those things which the law requires. We are forbidden to have any strange gods. When the mind, assaulted by mistrust, looks around to some other quarter ; when it is stimulated by a sud-

(*h*) Rom. xiii. 9.

den desire of transferring its happiness from God to some other being ; whence proceed these emotions, however transient, but from the existence of some vacant space in the soul to receive such temptations ? And not to protract this argument to greater length, we are commanded to love God with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our soul : therefore, unless all the powers of our soul be intensely engaged in the love of God, we have already departed from the obedience required by the law ; for that the dominion of God is not well established in our conscience, is evident, from the enemies that there rebel against his government, and interrupt the execution of his commands. That the last commandment properly belongs to this point, has been already demonstrated. Have we felt any evil desire in our heart ? we are already guilty of concupiscence, and are become at once transgressors of the law ; because the Lord forbids us, not only to plan and attempt any thing that would prove detrimental to another, but even to be stimulated and agitated with concupiscence. Now, the curse of God always rests on the transgression of the law. We have no reason, therefore, to exempt even the most trivial emotions of concupiscence from the sentence of death. "In determining the nature of different sins," says Augustine, "let us not use deceitful balances, to weigh what we please and how we please, according to our own humour, saying, This is heavy, — This is light ; but let us borrow the Divine balance from the Holy Scriptures, as from the treasury of the Lord, and therein weigh what is heavy ; or rather let us weigh nothing ourselves, but acknowledge the weights already determined by the Lord." And what says the Scripture ? The assertion of Paul, that "the wages of sin is death," (i) sufficiently demonstrates this groundless distinction to have been unknown to him. As we have already too strong a propensity to hypocrisy, this opiate ought by no means to have been added, to lull our consciences into greater insensibility.

LIX. I wish these persons would consider the meaning of this declaration of Christ : "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." (k) Are not they of this number, who thus presume to extenuate the transgression of the law, as though it were not worthy of death ? But they ought to consider, not merely what is commanded, but who it is that gives the commands ; because the smallest transgression of the law, which he has given, is a derogation from his authority. Is the violation of the Divine majesty in any case a trivial thing in their estimation ? Lastly, if God has de-

(i) Rom. vi. 23.

(k) Matt. v. 19.

clared his will in the law, whatever is contrary to the law displeases him. Will they pretend that the wrath of God is so debilitated and disarmed, that the punishment of death cannot immediately follow? He has unequivocally declared, if they could induce themselves to listen to his voice, rather than obscure the plain truth with their frivolous subtleties, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" (*l*) and, which I have before cited, "The wages of sin is death." (*m*) They acknowledge it to be sin, because it is impossible to deny it; yet they contend that it is not *mortal* sin. But, as they have hitherto too much resigned themselves to infatuation, they should at length learn to return to the exercise of their reason. If they persevere in their dreams, we will take our leave of them. Let the children of God know that all sin is *mortal*; because it is a rebellion against the will of God, which necessarily provokes his wrath; because it is a transgression of the law, against which the Divine judgment is universally denounced; and that the offences of the saints are *venial*, not of their own nature, but because they obtain pardon through the mercy of God.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST, THOUGH KNOWN TO THE JEWS UNDER THE LAW, YET
CLEARLY REVEALED ONLY IN THE GOSPEL.

As it was not without reason, or without effect, that God was pleased, in ancient times, to manifest himself as a Father by means of expiations and sacrifices, and that he consecrated to himself a chosen people, there is no doubt that he was known, even then, in the same image in which he now appears to us with meridian splendour. Therefore Malachi, after having enjoined the Jews to attend to the law of Moses, and to persevere in the observance of it, (because after his death there was to be an interruption of the prophetic office,) immediately announces, that "the Sun of righteousness shall arise." (*n*) In this language he suggests, that the law tended to excite in the pious an expectation of the Messiah that was to come, and that at his advent there was reason to hope for a much greater degree of light. For this reason Peter says that "the Prophets have inquired and searched diligently concerning the salvation," which is now manifested in the gospel; and that "it was re-

(*l*) Ezek. xviii. 20.

(*m*) Rom. vi. 23.

(*n*) Mal. iv. 2.

vealed to them, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you." (*o*) Not that their instructions were useless to the ancient people, or unprofitable to themselves, but because they did not enjoy the treasure, which God through their hands has transmitted to us. For in the present day, the grace, which was the subject of their testimony, is familiarly exhibited before our eyes; and whereas they had but a small taste, we have offered to us a more copious fruition of it. Therefore Christ, who asserts that "Moses wrote of him," (*p*) nevertheless extols that measure of grace in which we excel the Jews. Addressing his disciples, he says, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." (*q*) "For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (*r*) This is no small recommendation of the evangelical revelation, that God has preferred us to those holy fathers who were eminent for singular piety. To this declaration that other passage is not at all repugnant, where Christ says, "Abraham saw my day, and was glad." (*s*) For though his prospect of a thing so very remote was attended with much obscurity, yet there was nothing wanting to the certainty of a well founded hope; and hence that joy which accompanied the holy patriarch even to his death. Neither does this assertion of John the Baptist, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," (*t*) exclude the pious, who had died before his time, from a participation of the understanding and light which shine in the person of Christ; but, comparing their condition with ours, it teaches us that we have a clear manifestation of those mysteries, of which they had only an obscure prospect through the medium of shadows; as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews more copiously and excellently shows, that "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (*v*) Therefore, though the only begotten Son, who is now to us "the brightness of the glory, and the express image of the person," (*w*) of God the Father, was formerly known to the Jews, as we have elsewhere shown by a quotation from Paul, that he was the leader of their ancient deliverance from Egypt; yet this also is a truth, which is asserted by the same Paul in another place, that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in

(*o*) 1 Peter i. 10—12.
(*p*) John v. 46.

(*q*) Matt. xiii. 16.
(*r*) Luke x. 24.

(*s*) John viii. 56.
(*t*) John i. 18.

(*v*) Heb. i. 1, 2
(*w*) Heb. i. 3.

our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (x) For when he appeared in this his image, he made himself visible, as it were, in comparison with the obscure and shadowy representation of him which had been given before. This renders the ingratitude and obstinacy of those, who shut their eyes amid this meridian blaze, so much the more vile and detestable. And therefore Paul says that Satan, "the god of this world, hath blinded their minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." (y)

II. Now, I understand the gospel to be a clear manifestation of the mystery of Christ. I grant indeed, since Paul styles the gospel *the doctrine of faith*, (z) that whatever promises we find in the law concerning the gracious remission of sins, by which God reconciles men to himself, are accounted parts of it. For he opposes faith to those terrors which torment and harass the conscience, if salvation is to be sought by works. Whence it follows, that taking the word *gospel* in a large sense, it comprehends all those testimonies, which God formerly gave to the fathers, of his mercy and paternal favour; but it is more eminently applicable to the promulgation of the grace exhibited in Christ. This acceptance is not only sanctioned by common use, but supported by the authority of Christ and the Apostles. Whence it is properly said of him, that he "preached the gospel of the kingdom." (a) And Mark introduces himself with this preface: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." But it is needless to collect more passages to prove a thing sufficiently known. Christ, then, by his advent, "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (b) By these expressions Paul means, not that the fathers were immersed in the shades of death, till the Son of God became incarnate; but, claiming for the gospel this honourable prerogative, he teaches that it is a new and unusual kind of legation, in which God has performed those things that he had promised, that the truth of the promises might appear in the person of his Son. For though the faithful have always experienced the truth of the assertion of Paul, that "all the promises of God in him are Yea, and in him Amen," (c) because they have been sealed in their hearts, yet, since he has completed in his body all the parts of our salvation, the lively exhibition of those things has justly obtained new and singular praise. Hence this declaration of Christ: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (d) For though he seems to allude to the ladder which

(x) 2 Cor. iv. 6.
(a) Matt. ix. 35.

(y) 2 Cor. iv. 4.
(b) 2 Tim. i. 10.

(z) 1 Tim. iv. 6.
(c) 2 Cor. i. 20.

(d) John i. 51.

the patriarch Jacob saw in a vision, yet he displays the superior excellence of his advent by this character—that he has opened the gate of heaven to give us free admittance into it.

III. Nevertheless, we must beware of the diabolical imagination of Servetus, who, while he designs to extol the magnitude of the grace of Christ, or at least professes such a design, totally abolishes all the promises, as though they were terminated together with the law. He pretends, that by faith in the gospel we receive the completion of all the promises; as though there were no distinction between us and Christ. I have just observed, that Christ left nothing incomplete of all that was essential to our salvation; but it is not a fair inference, that we already enjoy the benefits procured by him; for this would contradict the declaration of Paul, that “hope is laid up for us.” (e) I grant, indeed, that when we believe in Christ, we at the same time pass from death to life; but we should also remember the observation of John, that though “we are now the sons of God, it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (f) Though Christ, therefore, offers us in the gospel a present plenitude of spiritual blessings, yet the fruition of them is concealed under the custody of hope, till we are divested of our corruptible body, and transfigured into the glory of him who has gone before us. In the mean time, the Holy Spirit commands us to rely on the promises; and his authority we ought to consider sufficient to silence all the clamours of Servetus. For according to the testimony of Paul, “godliness hath promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;” (g) and therefore he boasts of being an Apostle of Christ, “according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.” (h) In another place he apprizes us that we have the same promises which were given to the saints in former times. (i) Finally, he represents it as the summum of felicity, that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. (k) Nor, indeed, have we otherwise any enjoyment of Christ, any further than as we embrace him invested with his promises. Hence it is, that he dwells in our hearts, and yet we live like pilgrims at a distance from him; because “we walk by faith, and not by sight.” Nor is there any contrariety in these two positions, that we possess in Christ all that belongs to the perfection of the life of heaven, and yet that faith is a vision of invisible blessings. Only there is a difference to be observed in the nature or quality of the promises; because the gospel affords a clear discovery of that which the law has represented in shadows and types.

(e) Col. i. 5.
(f) 1 John iii. 2.

(g) 1 Tim. iv. 8.
(h) 2 Tim. i. 1.

(i) 2 Cor. vii. 1.
(k) Ephes. i. 13.

IV. This likewise evinces the error of those who never make any other comparison between the Law and the Gospel, than between the merit of works and the gratuitous imputation of righteousness. This antithesis, I grant, is by no means to be rejected ; because Paul by the word *law* frequently intends the rule of a righteous life, in which God requires of us what we owe to him, affording us no hope of life, unless we fulfil every part of it, and, on the contrary, annexing a curse if we are guilty of the smallest transgression. This is the sense in which he uses it in those passages, where he argues that we are accepted by God through grace, and are accounted righteous through his pardon of our sins, because the observance of the law, to which the reward is promised, is not to be found in any man. Paul, therefore, justly represents the righteousness of the law and that of the gospel as opposed to each other. But the gospel has not succeeded the whole law, so as to introduce a different way of salvation ; but rather to confirm and ratify the promises of the law, and to connect the body with the shadows. For when Christ says that "the law and the prophets were until John," he does not abandon the fathers to the curse which the slaves of the law cannot escape ; he rather implies that they were only initiated in the rudiments of religion, so that they remained far below the sublimity of the evangelical doctrine. Wherefore, when Paul calls the gospel "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," he afterwards adds that it is "witnessed by the law and the prophets." (l) But at the end of the same Epistle, although he asserts that the preaching of Jesus Christ is "the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began," he qualifies this sentiment with the following explication — that it "is now made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets made known to all nations." (m) Hence we conclude, that when mention is made of the whole law, the gospel differs from it only with respect to a clear manifestation ; but on account of the inestimable plenitude of grace, which has been displayed to us in Christ, the celestial kingdom of God is justly said to have been erected in the earth at his advent.

V. Now, John was placed between the Law and the Gospel, holding an intermediate office connected with both. For though, in calling Christ "the Lamb of God" and "the victim for the expiation of sins," (n) he preached the substance of the gospel ; yet, because he did not clearly express that incomparable power and glory which afterwards appeared in his resurrection, Christ affirms that he is not equal to the Apostles. This is his meaning in the following words: "Among them

(l) Rom. i. 16 ; iii. 21.

(m) Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

(n) John i. 29.

that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (o) For he is not there commending the persons of men, but after having preferred John to all the prophets, he allots the highest degree of honour to the preaching of the gospel, which we have elsewhere seen is signified by "the kingdom of heaven." When John himself said that he was only a "voice," (p) as though he were inferior to the prophets, this declaration proceeded not from a pretended humility; he meant to signify that he was not intrusted with a proper embassy, but acted merely in the capacity of a herald, according to the prediction of Malachi: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (q) Nor indeed, through the whole course of his ministry, did he aim at any thing but procuring disciples for Christ, which he also proves from Isaiah to have been the commission given him by God. In this sense he was called by Christ "a burning and a shining light," (r) because the full day had not yet arrived. Yet this is no reason why he should not be numbered among the preachers of the gospel, as he used the same baptism which was afterwards delivered to the apostles. But it was not till after Christ was received into the celestial glory, that the more free and rapid progress of the apostles completed what John had begun.

CHAPTER X.

THE SIMILARITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

FROM the preceding observations it may now be evident, that all those persons, from the beginning of the world, whom God has adopted into the society of his people, have been federally connected with him by the same law and the same doctrine which are in force among us: but because it is of no small importance that this point be established, I shall show, by way of appendix, since the fathers were partakers with us of the same inheritance, and hoped for the same salvation through the grace of our common Mediator, how far their condition in this connection was different from ours. For though the testimonies we have collected from the law and the prophets in proof of this, render it sufficiently evident that the people

(o) Matt. xi. 11.
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(p) John i. 23.
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(q) Mal. iv. 5.

(r) John v. 35.

of God have never had any other rule of religion and piety, yet because some writers have raised many disputes concerning the difference of the Old and New Testaments, which may occasion doubts in the mind of an undiscerning reader, we shall assign a particular chapter for the better and more accurate discussion of this subject. Moreover, what would otherwise have been very useful, has now been rendered necessary for us by Servetus and some madmen of the sect of the Anabaptists, who entertain no other ideas of the Israelitish nation, than of a herd of swine, whom they pretend to have been pampered by the Lord in this world, without the least hope of a future immortality in heaven. To defend the pious mind, therefore, from this pestilent error, and at the same time to remove all difficulties which may arise from the mention of a diversity between the Old and New Testaments, let us, as we proceed, examine what similarity there is between them, and what difference; what covenant the Lord made with the Israelites, in ancient times, before the advent of Christ, and what he has entered into with us since his manifestation in the flesh.

II. And, indeed, both these topics may be despatched in one word. The covenant of all the fathers is so far from differing substantially from ours, that it is the very same; it only varies in the administration. But as such extreme brevity would not convey to any man a clear understanding of the subject, it is necessary, if we would do any good, to proceed to a more diffuse explication of it. But in showing their similarity, or rather unity, it will be needless to recapitulate all the particulars which have already been mentioned, and unseasonable to introduce those things which remain to be discussed in some other place. We must here insist chiefly on three principal points. We have to maintain, First, that carnal opulence and felicity were not proposed to the Jews as the mark towards which they should ultimately aspire, but that they were adopted to the hope of immortality, and that the truth of this adoption was certified to them by oracles, by the law, and by the prophets. Secondly, that the covenant, by which they were united to the Lord, was founded, not on any merits of theirs, but on the mere mercy of God who called them. Thirdly, that they both possessed and knew Christ as the Mediator, by whom they were united to God, and became partakers of his promises. The second of these points, as perhaps it is not yet sufficiently known, shall be demonstrated at large in its proper place. For we shall prove by numerous and explicit testimonies of the prophets, that whatever blessing the Lord ever gave or promised to his people, proceeded from his indulgent goodness. The third point has been clearly demonstrated in several places. And we have not wholly neglected the first.

III. In discussing the first point, therefore, because it principally belongs to the present argument, and is the grand subject of their controversy against us, we will use the more diligent application; yet in such a manner, that if any thing be wanting to the explication of the others, it may be supplied as we proceed, or added afterwards in a suitable place. Indeed, the apostle removes every doubt respecting all these points, when he says, that God the Father “promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son,” (*s*) which he promulgated in the appointed time: and again, that the righteousness of faith, which is revealed in the gospel, is “witnessed by the law and the prophets.” (*t*) For the gospel does not detain men in the joy of the present life, but elevates them to the hope of immortality; does not fasten them to terrestrial delights, but announcing to them a hope reserved in heaven, does as it were transport them thither. For this is the description which he gives in another place: “In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” (*v*) Again: “We heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.” (*w*) Again: “He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (*x*) Whence it is called “the word of salvation,” and “the power of God to the salvation of believers,” and “the kingdom of heaven.” Now, if the doctrine of the gospel be spiritual, and open a way to the possession of an immortal life, let us not suppose that they, to whom it was promised and announced, were totally negligent and careless of their souls, and stupefied in the pursuit of corporeal pleasures. Nor let any one here cavil, that the promises which are recorded in the law and the prophets, respecting the gospel, were not designed for the Jews. For just after having spoken of the gospel being promised in the law, he adds, “that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law.” (*y*) This was in another argument, I grant; but when he said that whatever the law inculcates truly belonged to the Jews, he was not so forgetful as not to remember what he had affirmed, a few verses before, concerning the gospel promised in the law. By declaring that the Old Testament contained evangelical promises, therefore, the apostle most clearly demonstrates that it principally related to a future life.

IV. For the same reason it follows, that it was founded on

(*s*) Rom. i. 1—3.

(*t*) Rom. iii. 21.

(*v*) Ephes. i. 13, 14.

(*w*) Col. i. 4, 5.

(*x*) 2 Thess. ii. 14.

(*y*) Rom. iii. 19.

servers of them "perfect as pertaining to the conscience," that by animal victims it could neither expiate sins nor procure true holiness. (*q*) He concludes, therefore, that it contained "a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image of the things;" (*r*) and that consequently it had no other office, but to serve as an introduction to "a better hope," (*s*) which is exhibited in the gospel. Here we have to inquire in what respect the Legal covenant is compared with the Evangelical, the ministry of Christ with the ministry of Moses. For if the comparison related to the substance of the promises, there would be a great discordance between the two testaments; but as the state of the question leads us to a different point, we must attend to the scope of the apostle, in order to discover the truth. Let us, then, bring forward the covenant, which God has once made, which is eternal, and never to be abolished. The accomplishment, whence it derives its establishment and ratification, is Christ. While such a confirmation was waited for, the Lord by Moses prescribed ceremonies, to serve as solemn symbols of the confirmation. It came to be a subject of contention, whether the ceremonies ordained in the law ought to cease and give place to Christ. Now, though these ceremonies were only accidents or concomitants of the covenant, yet being the instruments of its administration, they bear the name of the covenant; as it is common to give to other sacraments the names of the things they represent. In a word, therefore, what is here called the Old Testament is a solemn method of confirming the covenant, consisting of ceremonies and sacrifices. Since it contains nothing substantial, unless we proceed further, the apostle contends that it ought to be repealed and abrogated, in order to make way for Christ, the Surety and Mediator of a better testament, (*t*) by whom eternal sanctification has been at once procured for the elect, and those transgressions obliterated, which remained under the law. Or, if you prefer it, take the following statement of it; that the Old Testament of the Lord was that which was delivered to the Jews, involved in a shadowy and inefficacious observance of ceremonies, and that it was therefore temporary, because it remained as it were in suspense, till it was supported by a firm and substantial confirmation; but that it was made new and eternal, when it was consecrated and established by the blood of Christ. Whence Christ calls the cup which he gives to his disciples in the supper, "the cup of the New Testament in his blood;" (*u*) to signify that when the testament of God is sealed with his blood, the truth of it is then accomplished, and thus it is made new and eternal.

(*q*) Heb. ix. 13, 14; x. 4.(*t*) Heb. vii. 22.(*r*) Heb. x. 1.(*s*) Heb. vii. 19.(*u*) Matt. xxvi. 28.

V. Hence it appears in what sense the apostle said, that the Jews were conducted to Christ by the tuition of the law, before he was manifested in the flesh. (*w*) He confesses also that they were children and heirs of God, but such as, on account of their age, required to be kept under the care of a tutor. (*x*) For it was reasonable that before the Sun of Righteousness was risen, there should be neither such a full blaze of revelation, nor such great clearness of understanding. Therefore the Lord dispensed the light of his word to them in such a manner, that they had yet only a distant and obscure prospect of it. Paul describes this slenderness of understanding as a state of childhood, which it was the Lord's will to exercise in the elements of this world and in external observances, as rules of puerile discipline, till the manifestation of Christ, by whom the knowledge of the faithful was to grow to maturity. Christ himself alluded to this distinction, when he said, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached." (*y*) What discoveries did Moses and the prophets make to their contemporaries? They afforded them some taste of that wisdom which was in after times to be clearly manifested, and gave them a distant prospect of its future splendour. But when Christ could be plainly pointed out, the kingdom of God was revealed. For in him are discovered "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (*z*) by which we penetrate almost into the furthest recesses of heaven.

VI. Nor is it any objection to our argument, that scarcely a person can be found in the Christian Church, who is to be compared with Abraham in the excellency of his faith; or that the prophets were distinguished by such energy of the Spirit as, even at this day, is sufficient to illuminate the whole world. For our present inquiry is, not what grace the Lord has conferred on a few, but what is the ordinary method which he has pursued in the instruction of his people; such as is found even among the prophets themselves, who were endued with peculiar knowledge above others. For their preaching is obscure, as relating to things very distant, and is comprehended in types. Besides, notwithstanding their wonderful eminence in knowledge, yet because they were under a necessity of submitting to the same tuition as the rest of the people, they are considered as sustaining the character of children as well as others. Finally, none of them possessed knowledge so clear as not to partake more or less of the obscurity of the age. Whence this observation of Christ: "Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have

(*w*) Gal. iii. 24.(*x*) Gal. iv. 1, &c.(*y*) Luke xvi. 16.(*z*) Col. ii. 3.

not seen them ; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (a) "Blessed are your eyes, for they see ; and your ears, for they hear." (b) And, indeed, it is reasonable that the presence of Christ should be distinguished by the prerogative of introducing a clearer revelation of the mysteries of heaven. To the same purpose also is the passage, which we have before cited from the First Epistle of Peter, that it was revealed to them, that the principal advantage of their labours would be experienced in our times. (c)

VII. I come now to the third difference, which is taken from Jeremiah, whose words are these : "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah ; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband to them, saith the Lord ; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord ; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord ; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (d) From this passage the apostle took occasion to institute the following comparison between the law and the gospel : he calls the former a literal, the latter a spiritual doctrine ; the former, he says, was engraven on tables of stone, but the latter is inscribed on the heart ; (e) the former was the preaching of death, but the latter of life ; the former was the ministration of condemnation, but the latter of righteousness ; the former is abolished, but the latter remains. As the design of the apostle was to express the sense of the prophet, it will be sufficient for us to consider the language of one of them, in order to discover the meaning of both. There is, however, some difference between them. For the apostle speaks of the law in less honourable terms than the prophet does ; and that not simply with respect to the law itself, but, because there were some disturbers, who were full of improper zeal for the law, and by their perverse attachment to the ceremonies obscured the glory of the gospel, he disputes concerning the nature of the law with reference to their error and foolish affection for it. This peculiarity in Paul, therefore, will be worthy of our obser-

(a) Luke x. 24.

(b) Matt. xiii. 16.

(c) 1 Peter i. 12.

(d) Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.

(e) 2 Cor. iii. 6, &c.

vation. Both of them, as they contrast the Old and New Testaments with each other, consider nothing in the law, but what properly belongs to it. For example, the law contains frequent promises of mercy; but as they are borrowed from another dispensation, they are not considered as part of the law, when the mere nature of the law is the subject of discussion. All that they attribute to it is, that it enjoins what is right, and prohibits crimes; that it proclaims a reward for the followers of righteousness, and denounces punishments against transgressors; but that it neither changes nor corrects the depravity of heart which is natural to all men.

VIII. Now, let us explain the comparison of the apostle in all its branches. In the first place, the Old Testament is literal, because it was promulgated without the efficacy of the Spirit; the New is spiritual, because the Lord has engraven it in a spiritual manner on the hearts of men. The second contrast, therefore, serves as an elucidation of the first. The Old Testament is the revelation of death, because it can only involve all mankind in a curse; the New is the instrument of life, because it delivers us from the curse, and restores us to favour with God. The former is the ministry of condemnation, because it convicts all the children of Adam of unrighteousness; the latter is the ministry of righteousness, because it reveals the mercy of God, by which we are made righteous. The last contrast must be referred to the legal ceremonies. The law having an image of things that were at a distance, it was necessary that in time it should be abolished and disappear. The gospel, exhibiting the body itself, retains a firm and perpetual stability. Jeremiah calls even the moral law a weak and frail covenant, but for another reason; namely, because it was soon broken by the sudden defection of an ungrateful people. But as such a violation arises from the fault of the people, it cannot be properly attributed to the Testament. The ceremonies, however, which at the advent of Christ were abolished by their own weakness, contained in themselves the cause of their abrogation. Now, this difference between the "letter" and the "spirit" is not to be understood as if the Lord had given his law to the Jews without any beneficial result, without one of them being converted to him; but it is used in a way of comparison, to display the plenitude of grace with which the same Legislator, assuming as it were a new character, has honoured the preaching of the gospel. For if we survey the multitude of those, from among all nations, whom, by the influence of his Spirit in the preaching of the gospel, the Lord has regenerated and gathered into communion with his Church, we shall say that those of the ancient Israelites, who cordially and sincerely embraced the covenant

of the Lord, were extremely few; though, if estimated by themselves without any comparison, they amounted to a considerable number.

IX. The fourth difference arises out of the third. For the Scripture calls the Old Testament a covenant of bondage, because it produces fear in the mind; but the New it describes as a covenant of liberty, because it leads the heart to confidence and security. Thus Paul, in the eighth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, says, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (*f*) To the same purpose is that passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the faithful now "are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest," where nothing can be either heard or seen, but what must strike terror into the mind; so that even Moses himself is exceedingly afraid at the sound of the terrible voice, which they all pray that they may hear no more; but that now the faithful "are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," (*g*) &c. What Paul briefly touches in the passage which we have adduced from the Epistle to the Romans, he explains more at large in his Epistle to the Galatians, when he allegorizes the two sons of Abraham in the following manner—that Agar, the bond-woman, is a type of mount Sinai, where the people of Israel received the law; that Sarah, the free-woman, is a figure of the celestial Jerusalem, whence proceeds the gospel. That as the son of Agar is born in bondage, and can never attain to the inheritance, and the son of Sarah is born free, and has a right to the inheritance, (*h*) so by the law we were devoted to slavery, but by the gospel alone are regenerated to liberty. Now, the whole may be summed up thus—that the Old Testament filled men's consciences with fear and trembling; but that by the benefit of the New Testament, they are delivered, and enabled to rejoice. The former kept their consciences under a yoke of severe bondage; but by the liberality of the latter they are emancipated and admitted to liberty. If any one object to us the case of the holy fathers of the Israelitish people, that as they were clearly possessed of the same spirit of faith as we are, they must consequently have been partakers of the same liberty and joy, we reply, that neither of these originated from the law; but that, when they felt themselves, by means of the law, oppressed with their servile condition, and wearied with disquietude of conscience, they fled for refuge to the gospel; and that therefore it was a peculiar advantage

(*f*) Rom. viii. 15.(*g*) Heb. xii. 18, &c.(*h*) Gal. iv. 22, &c.

of the New Testament, that they enjoyed an exception from the common law of the Old Testament, and were exempted from those evils. Besides, we shall deny that they were favoured with the spirit of liberty and security, to such a degree as not to experience from the law some measure both of fear and of servitude. For notwithstanding their enjoyment of that privilege, which they obtained by the grace of the gospel, yet they were subject to the same observances and burdens as the people in general. As they were obliged, therefore, to a diligent observance of these ceremonies, which were emblems of the state of pupilage similar to bondage, and the hand-writing, by which they confessed themselves guilty of sin, did not release them from the obligation, they may justly be said, in comparison with us, to have been under a testament of bondage and fear, when we consider the common mode of procedure which the Lord then pursued with the Israelitish nation.

X. The three last comparisons which we have mentioned are between the law and the gospel. In these, therefore, "the Old Testament" denotes *the law*; and "the New Testament," *the gospel*. The first comparison extends further, for it comprehends also the promises, which were given before the law. When Augustine denied that they ought to be considered as part of the Old Testament, he gave a very proper opinion, and intended the same that we now teach; for he had in view those passages of Jeremiah and Paul, in which the Old Testament is distinguished from the word of grace and mercy. He very judiciously adds also in the same place, that the children of the promise, from the beginning of the world, who have been regenerated by God, and, under the influence of faith working by love, have obeyed his commands, belong to the New Testament; and *that*, in hope, not of carnal, terrestrial, and temporal things, but of spiritual, celestial, and eternal blessings; especially believing in the Mediator, through whom they doubted not that the Spirit was dispensed to them to enable them to do their duty, and that whenever they sinned they were pardoned. For this is the very same thing which I meant to assert: That all the saints, whom, from the beginning of the world, the Scripture mentions as having been peculiarly chosen by God, have been partakers of the same blessing with us to eternal salvation. Between our distinction and that of Augustine there is this difference — that ours (according to this declaration of Christ, "the law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached;") (i) distinguishes between the clearness of the gospel and the more obscure dispensation of the word which preceded it; whilst the other merely

(i) Luke xvi. 16.

discriminates the weakness of the law from the stability of the gospel. Here it must also be remarked concerning the holy fathers, that though they lived under the Old Testament, they did not rest satisfied with it, but always aspired after the New, and thus enjoyed a certain participation of it. For all those who contented themselves with present shadows, and did not extend their views to Christ, are condemned by the apostle as blind and under the curse. For, to say nothing on other points, what greater ignorance can be imagined than to hope for an expiation of sin by the sacrifice of an animal? than to seek for the purification of the soul by an external ablution with water? than to wish to appease God with frigid ceremonies, as though they afforded him great pleasure? For all these absurdities are chargeable on those who adhere to the observances of the law, without any reference to Christ.

XI. The fifth difference, which we may add, consists in this — that till the advent of Christ, the Lord selected one nation, to which he would limit the covenant of his grace. Moses says, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, — the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." (*k*) In another place he thus addresses the people: "Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people." (*l*) Therefore he favoured that people with the exclusive knowledge of his name, as though they alone of all mankind belonged to him; he deposited his covenant as it were in their bosom; to them he manifested the presence of his power; he honoured them with every privilege. But to omit the rest of his benefits, the only one that relates to our present argument is, that he united them to himself by the communication of his word, in order that he might be denominated and esteemed their God. In the mean time he suffered other nations, as though they had no business or intercourse with him, to walk in vanity; (*m*) nor did he employ means to prevent their destruction by sending them the only remedy — the preaching of his word. The Israelitish nation, therefore, were then as darling sons; others were strangers: they were known to him, and received under his faithful protection; others were left to their own darkness: they were sanctified by God; others were profane: they were honoured with the Divine presence; others were excluded from approaching it. But when the fulness of the time was come, (*n*) appointed for the restoration of all things, (*o*) and

(*k*) Deut. xxxii. 8, 9.(*n*) Gal. iv. 4.(*l*) Deut. x. 14.(*o*) Matt. xvii. 11.(*m*) Acts xiv. 16.

the Reconciler of God and men was manifested, (*p*) the barrier was demolished, which had so long confined the Divine mercy within the limits of the Jewish church, and peace was announced to them who were at a distance, and to them who were near, that being both reconciled to God, they might coalesce into one people. Wherefore "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, but Christ is all and in all;" (*q*) "to whom the heathen are given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;" (*r*) that he may have a universal "dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." (*s*)

XII. The vocation of the Gentiles, therefore, is an eminent illustration of the superior excellence of the New Testament above the Old. It had, indeed, before been most explicitly announced in numerous predictions of the prophets; but so as that the completion of it was deferred to the kingdom of the Messiah. And even Christ himself made no advances towards it at the first commencement of his preaching, but deferred it till he should have completed all the parts of our redemption, finished the time of his humiliation, and received from the Father "a name which is above every name, before which every knee shall bow." (*t*) Wherefore, when this season was not yet arrived, he said to a Canaanitish woman, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel:" (*u*) nor did he permit the apostles, in his first mission of them, to exceed these limits. "Go not," says he, "into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (*w*) And though this calling of the Gentiles was announced by so many testimonies, yet when the apostles were about to enter upon it, it appeared to them so novel and strange, that they dreaded it, as if it had been a prodigy: indeed it was with trepidation and reluctance that they at length engaged in it. Nor is this surprising; for it seemed not at all reasonable, that the Lord, who for so many ages had separated the Israelites from the rest of the nations, should, as it were, suddenly change his design, and annihilate this distinction. It had indeed been predicted in the prophecies; but they could not pay such great attention to the prophecies, as to be wholly unmoved with the novelty of the circumstance, which forced itself on their observation. Nor were the specimens, which the Lord had formerly given, of the future vocation of the Gentiles, sufficient to influence them. For besides his having called only very few of them, he had even incorporated them into the family of Abra-

(*p*) Eph. ii. 14. (*q*) Col. iii. 11. (*r*) Psalm ii. 8. (*s*) Psalm lxxii. 8.
 (*t*) Phil. ii. 9, 10. (*u*) Matt. xv. 24. (*w*) Matt. x. 5, 6.

ham, that they might be added to his people ; but by that public vocation, the Gentiles were not only raised to an equality with the Jews, but appeared to succeed to their places as though they had been dead. Besides, of all the strangers whom God had before incorporated into the Church, none were ever placed on an equality with the Jews. 'Therefore it is not without reason that Paul so celebrates this "mystery which was hidden from ages and from generations," (x) and which he represents as an object of admiration even to angels. (y)

XIII. In these four or five points, I think I have given a correct and faithful statement of the whole of the difference between the Old and the New Testament, as far as is sufficient for a simple system of doctrine. But because some persons represent this variety in the government of the Church, these different modes of instruction, and such a considerable alteration of rites and ceremonies, as a great absurdity, we must reply to them, before we proceed to other subjects. And this may be done in a brief manner, since the objections are not so strong as to require a laborious refutation. It is not reasonable, they say, that God, who is perpetually consistent with himself, should undergo so great a change as afterwards to disallow what he had once enjoined and commanded. I reply, that God ought not therefore to be deemed mutable, because he has accommodated different forms to different ages, as he knew would be suitable for each. If the husbandman prescribes different employments to his family in the winter, from those which he allots them in the summer, we must not therefore accuse him of inconstancy, or impute to him a deviation from the proper rules of agriculture, which are connected with the perpetual course of nature. Thus, also, if a father instructs, governs, and manages his children one way in infancy, another in childhood, and another in youth, we must not therefore charge him with being inconstant, or forsaking his own designs. Why, then, do we stigmatize God with the character of inconstancy, because he has made an apt and suitable distinction between different times ? The last similitude ought fully to satisfy us. Paul compares the Jews to children, and Christians to youths. (z) What impropriety is there in this part of the government of God, that he detained them in the rudiments which were suitable to them on account of their age, but has placed us under a stronger and more manly discipline ? It is a proof, therefore, of the constancy of God, that he has delivered the same doctrine in all ages, and perseveres in requiring the same worship of his name which he commanded from the

(x) Col. i. 26.

(y) Eph. iii. 10.

(z) Gal. iv. 1—3.

beginning. By changing the external form and mode, he has discovered no mutability in himself, but has so far accommodated himself to the capacity of men, which is various and mutable.

XIV. But they inquire whence this diversity proceeded, except from the will of God. Could he not, as well from the beginning as since the advent of Christ, give a revelation of eternal life in clear language without any figures, instruct his people by a few plain sacraments, bestow his Holy Spirit, and diffuse his grace through all the world? This is just the same as if they were to quarrel with God, because he created the world at so late a period, whereas he might have done it before; or because he has appointed the alternate vicissitudes of summer and winter, of day and night. But let us not doubt what ought to be believed by all pious men, that whatever is done by God is done wisely and righteously; although we frequently know nothing of the causes which render such transactions necessary. For it would be arrogating too much to ourselves, not to permit God to keep the reasons of his decrees concealed from us. But it is surprising, say they, that he now rejects and abominates the sacrifices of cattle, and all the apparatus of the Levitical priesthood, with which he used to be delighted; as though truly these external and transitory things could afford pleasure to God, or affect him in any way whatever. It has already been observed, that he did none of these things on his own account, but appointed them all for the salvation of men. If a physician cure a young man of any disease by a very excellent method, and afterwards adopt a different mode of cure with the same person when advanced in years, shall we therefore say that he rejects the method of cure which he before approved? We will rather say, that he perseveres in the same system, and considers the difference of age. Thus it was necessary, before the appearance of Christ, that he should be prefigured, and his future advent announced by one kind of emblems; since he has been manifested, it is right that he should be represented by others. But with respect to the Divine vocation, now more widely extended among all nations since the advent of Christ than it was before, and with regard to the more copious effusion of the graces of the Spirit, who can deny, that it is reasonable and just for God to retain under his own power and will the free dispensation of his favours; that he may illuminate what nations he pleases; that wherever he pleases he may introduce the preaching of his word; that he may give to his instruction whatever kind and degree of profit and success he pleases; that wherever he pleases, in any age, he may punish the ingratitude of the world by depriving them of the knowledge of his name,

and when he pleases restore it on account of his mercy? We see, therefore, the absurdity of the cavils with which impious men disturb the minds of the simple on this subject, to call in question either the righteousness of God or the truth of the Scripture.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST BECOMING MAN IN ORDER TO FULFIL THE OFFICE OF MEDIATOR.

It was of great importance to our interests, that he, who was to be our Mediator, should be both true God and true man. If an inquiry be made concerning the necessity of this, it was not indeed a simple, or, as we commonly say, an absolute necessity, but such as arose from the heavenly decree, on which the salvation of men depended. But our most merciful Father has appointed that which was best for us. For since our iniquities, like a cloud intervening between us and him, had entirely alienated us from the kingdom of heaven, no one that could not approach to God could be a mediator for the restoration of peace. But who could have approached to him? Could any one of the children of Adam? They, with their parent, all dreaded the Divine presence. Could any one of the angels? They also stood in need of a head, by a connection with whom they might be confirmed in a perfect and unvarying adherence to their God. What, then, could be done? Our situation was truly deplorable, unless the Divine majesty itself would descend to us; for we could not ascend to it. Thus it was necessary that the Son of God should become Immanuel, that is, God with us; and this in order that there might be a mutual union and coalition between his Divinity and the nature of man; for otherwise the proximity could not be sufficiently near, nor could the affinity be sufficiently strong, to authorize us to hope that God would dwell with us. So great was the discordance between our pollution and the perfect purity of God. Although man had remained immaculately innocent, yet his condition would have been too mean for him to approach to God without a Mediator. What, then, can he do, after having been plunged by his fatal fall into death and hell, defiled with so many blemishes, putrefying in his own corruption, and, in a word, overwhelmed with every curse? It is not without reason, therefore, that Paul, when about to exhibit Christ in the character of a Mediator, expressly speaks of him

as a man. "There is one Mediator," he says, "between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." (a) He might have called him God, or might indeed have omitted the appellation of man, as well as that of God; but because the Spirit, who spake by him, knew our infirmity, he has provided a very suitable remedy against it, by placing the Son of God familiarly among us, as though he were one of us. Therefore, that no one may distress himself where he is to seek the Mediator, or in what way he may approach him, the apostle, by denominating him a man, apprizes us that he is near, and even close to us, since he is our own flesh. He certainly intends the same as is stated in another place more at large — "that we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (b)

II. This will still more fully appear, if we consider, that it was no mean part which the Mediator had to perform; namely, to restore us to the Divine favour, so as, of children of men, to make us children of God; of heirs of hell, to make us heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Who could accomplish this, unless the Son of God should become also the Son of man, and thus receive to himself what belongs to us, and transfer to us that which is his, and make that which is his by nature ours by grace? Depending, therefore, on this pledge, we have confidence that we are the children from God, because he, who is the Son of God by nature, has provided himself a body from our body, flesh from our flesh, bones from our bones, (c) that he might be the same with us: he refused not to assume that which was peculiar to us, that we also might obtain that which he had peculiar to him; and that so in common with us he might be both the Son of God and the Son of man. Hence arises that holy fraternity, which he mentions with his own mouth in the following words: "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (d) On this account we have a certainty of the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, because the only Son of God, to whom it exclusively belonged, has adopted us as his brethren; and if we are his brethren, we are consequently co-heirs to the inheritance. (e) Moreover it was highly necessary also for this reason, that he who was to be our Redeemer should be truly both God and man. It was his office to swallow up death; who could do this, but he who was life itself? It was his to overcome sin; who could accomplish this, but righteousness itself? It was his to put to flight the powers of the world and of the air; who could do this, but a power superior both to

(a) 1 Tim. ii. 5.

(b) Heb. iv. 15.

(c) Eph. v. 30.

(d) John xx. 17.

(e) Rom. viii. 17.

the world and to the air? Now, who possesses life or righteousness, or the empire and power of heaven, but God alone? Therefore the most merciful God, when he determined on our redemption, became himself our Redeemer in the person of his only begotten Son!

III. Another branch of our reconciliation with God was this — that man, who had ruined himself by his own disobedience, should remedy his condition by obedience, should satisfy the justice of God, and suffer the punishment of his sin. Our Lord then made his appearance as a real man; he put on the character of Adam, and assumed his name, to act as his substitute in his obedience to the Father, to lay down our flesh as the price of satisfaction to the justice of God; and to suffer the punishment which we had deserved, in the same nature in which the offence had been committed. As it would have been impossible, therefore, for one who was only God to suffer death, or for one who was a mere man to overcome it, he associated the human nature with the Divine, that he might submit the weakness of the former to death, as an atonement for sins; and that with the power of the latter he might contend with death, and obtain a victory on our behalf. Those who despoil Christ, therefore, either of his Divinity or his humanity, either diminish his majesty and glory, or obscure his goodness. Nor are they, on the other hand, less injurious to men, whose faith they weaken and subvert; since it cannot stand any longer than it rests upon this foundation. Moreover, the Redeemer to be expected was that Son of Abraham and David, whom God had promised in the law and the prophets. Hence the minds of the faithful derive another advantage, because from the circumstance of his ancestry being traced to David and to Abraham, they have an additional assurance that this is the Christ, who was celebrated in so many prophecies. But we should particularly remember, what I have just stated — that our common nature is a pledge of our fellowship with the Son of God; that, clothed in our flesh, he vanquished sin and death, in order that the victory and triumph might be ours; that the flesh which he received from us he offered up as a sacrifice, in order to expiate and obliterate our guilt, and appease the just wrath of the Father.

IV. The persons who consider these things, with the diligent attention which they deserve, will easily disregard vague speculations which attract minds that are inconstant and fond of novelty. Such is the notion, that Christ would have become man, even though the human race had needed no redemption. I grant, indeed, that at the original creation, and in the state of integrity, he was exalted as head over angels and men; for which reason Paul calls him “the first-born of every

creature ; " (*f*) but since the whole Scriptures proclaim, that he was clothed in flesh in order to become a Redeemer, it argues excessive temerity to imagine another cause or another end for it. The end for which Christ was promised from the beginning, is sufficiently known ; it was to restore a fallen world, and to succour ruined men. Therefore under the law his image was exhibited in sacrifices, to inspire the faithful with a hope that God would be propitious to them, after he should be reconciled by the expiation of their sins. And as, in all ages, even before the promulgation of the law, the Mediator was never promised without blood, we conclude that he was destined by the eternal decree of God to purify the pollution of men ; because the effusion of blood is an emblem of expiation. The prophets proclaimed and foretold him, as the future reconciler of God and men. As a sufficient specimen of all, we refer to that very celebrated testimony of Isaiah, where he predicts, that he should be smitten of God for the transgressions of the people, that the chastisement of their peace might be upon him ; and that he should be a priest to offer up himself as a victim ; that by his stripes others should be healed ; and that because all men had gone astray, and been dispersed like sheep, it had pleased the Lord to afflict him and to lay on him the iniquities of all. (*g*) As we are informed that Christ is particularly appointed by God for the relief of miserable sinners, all who pass these bounds are guilty of indulging a foolish curiosity. When he himself appeared in the world, he declared the design of his advent to be, to appease God and restore us from death to life. The apostles testified the same. Thus John, before he informs us that the Word was made flesh, mentions the defection of man. (*h*) But our principal attention is due to Christ himself speaking of his own office. He says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (*i*) Again : "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live." (*k*) "I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (*l*) Again : "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." (*m*) Again : "They that be whole need not a physician." (*n*) There would be no end, if I meant to quote all the passages. The apostles with one consent call us back to this principle ; for certainly, if he had not come to reconcile God, the honour of his priesthood would have been lost, for a priest is appointed as a Mediator to intercede between God and

(*f*) Col. i. 15.(*g*) Isaiah liii. 4, &c.(*h*) John i. 9, &c.(*i*) John iii. 16.(*k*) John v. 25.(*l*) John xi. 25.(*m*) Matt. xviii. 11.(*n*) Matt. ix. 12.

men : (o) he could not have been our righteousness, because he was made a sacrifice for us, that God might not impute sins to us. (p) Finally, he would have been despoiled of all the noble characters under which he is celebrated in the Scripture. This assertion of Paul would have no foundation : "What the law could not do, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (q) Nor would there be any truth in what he teaches in another place, that "the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared" (r) in the gift of Christ as a Redeemer. To conclude, the Scripture no where assigns any other end, for which the Son of God should choose to become incarnate, and should also receive this command from the Father, than that he might be made a sacrifice to appease the Father on our account. "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer ; and that repentance should be preached in his name." (s) "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life. This commandment have I received of my Father." (t) "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." (u) Again : "Father, save me from this hour ; but for this cause came I unto this hour." (w) "Father, glorify thy Son." (x) Where he clearly assigns, as the end of his assumption of human nature, that it was to be an expiatory sacrifice for the abolition of sins. For the same reason, Zacharias pronounces that he is come, according to the promise given to the fathers, "to give light to them that sit in the shadow of death." (y) Let us remember that all these things are spoken of the Son of God, "in whom," according to the testimony of Paul, "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (z) and besides whom he glories in knowing nothing. (a)

V. If any one object, that it is not evinced by any of these things, that the same Christ, who has redeemed men from condemnation, could not have testified his love to them by assuming their nature, if they had remained in a state of integrity and safety, — we briefly reply, that since the Spirit declares these two things, Christ's becoming our Redeemer, and his participation of the same nature, to have been connected by the eternal decree of God, it is not right to make any further inquiry. For he who feels an eager desire to know something more, not being content with the immutable appointment of God, shows himself also not to be contented with this Christ, who has been given to us as the price of our redemption.

(o) Heb. v. 1.

(p) 2 Cor. v. 19.

(q) Rom. viii. 3.

(r) Titus iii. 4.

(s) Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

(t) John x. 17, 18.

(u) John iii. 14.

(w) John xii. 27.

(x) John xvii. 1.

(y) Luke i. 72, 79.

(z) Col. ii. 3.

(a) 1 Cor. ii. 2.

Paul not only tells us the end of his mission, but ascending to the sublime mystery of predestination, very properly represses all the licentiousness and prurience of the human mind, by declaring, that "the Father hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, and predestinated us to the adoption of children according to the good pleasure of his will, and made us accepted in his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood." (b) Here the fall of Adam is certainly not presupposed, as of anterior date; but we have a discovery of what was decreed by God before all ages, when he determined to remedy the misery of mankind. If any adversary object again, that this design of God depended on the fall of man, which he foresaw, it is abundantly sufficient for me, that every man is proceeding with impious presumption to imagine to himself a new Christ, whoever he be that permits himself to inquire, or wishes to know, concerning Christ, any more than God has predestinated in his secret decree. And justly does Paul, after having been thus treating of the peculiar office of Christ, implore, on behalf of the Ephesians, the spirit of understanding, "that they may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;" (c) as though he would labour to surround our minds with barriers, that wherever mention is made of Christ, they may not decline in the smallest degree from the grace of reconciliation. Wherefore, since "this is" testified by Paul to be "a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," (d) I gladly acquiesce in it. And since the same apostle in another place informs us, that "the grace, which is now made manifest by the gospel, was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," (e) I conclude that I ought to persevere in the same doctrine with constancy to the end. This modesty is unreasonably censured by Osiander, who in the present age has unhappily agitated this question, which a few persons had slightly touched before. He alleges a charge of presumption against those who deny that the Son of God would have appeared in the flesh, if Adam had never fallen, because this tenet is contradicted by no testimony of Scripture; as if Paul laid no restraint on such perverse curiosity, when, after having spoken of the accomplishment of our redemption by Christ, he immediately adds this injunction: "Avoid foolish questions." (f) The frenzy of some, that have been desirous of appearing prodigiously acute, has proceeded to such a length as to question whether the Son of God could assume the nature of an ass.

(b) Eph. i. 4, &c.

(c) Eph. iii. 18, 19.

(d) 1 Tim. i. 15.

(e) 2 Tim. i. 9.

(f) Titus iii. 9.

This monstrous supposition, which all pious persons justly abhor and detest, Osiander excuses under this pretext, that it is nowhere in Scripture expressly condemned; as if, when Paul esteems nothing valuable or worthy of being known but Christ crucified, he would admit an ass to be the author of salvation! Therefore he who in another place declares that Christ was appointed by the eternal decree of the Father as "the head over all," (*g*) would never acknowledge any other who had not been appointed to the office of a Redeemer.

VI. But the principle which he boasts is altogether frivolous. He maintains that man was created in the image of God, because he was formed in the similitude of the future Messiah, that he might resemble him whom the Father had already decreed to clothe with flesh. Whence he concludes that if Adam had never fallen from his primitive integrity, Christ would nevertheless have become man. How nugatory and forced this is, all who possess a sound judgment readily perceive. But he supposes that he has been the first to discover wherein the Divine image consisted; namely, that the glory of God not only shone in those eminent talents with which man was endued, but that God himself essentially resided in him. Now, though I admit that Adam bore the Divine image, inasmuch as he was united to God, which is the true and consummate perfection of dignity, yet I contend that the similitude of God is to be sought only in those characters of excellence, with which God distinguished Adam above the other creatures. And that Christ was even then the image of God, is universally allowed; and therefore whatever excellence was impressed on Adam proceeded from this circumstance, that he approached to the glory of his Maker by means of his only begotten Son. Man, therefore, was made in the image of God, and was designed to be a mirror to display the glory of his Creator. He was exalted to this degree of honour by the favour of the only begotten Son; but I add, that this Son was a common head to angels as well as to men; so that the angels also were entitled to the same dignity which was conferred on man. And when we hear them called the "children of God," (*h*) it would be unreasonable to deny that they have some resemblance to their Father. But if he designed his glory to be represented in angels as well as in men, and to be equally conspicuous in the angelic as in the human nature, Osiander betrays his ignorance and folly in saying that men were preferred to angels, because the latter did not bear the image of Christ. For they could not constantly enjoy the present contemplation of God, unless they were like him. And

(*g*) Eph. i. 22.(*h*) Psalm lxxxii. 6.

by an imputation of righteousness; so that we, who are unrighteous in ourselves, are considered as righteous in Christ. This is the doctrine preached by Paul in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts: "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (t) We see that after remission of sins, this justification is mentioned, as if by way of explanation: we see clearly that it means an acquittal; that it is separated from the works of the law; that it is a mere favour of Christ; that it is apprehended by faith: we see, finally, the interposition of a satisfaction, when he says that we are justified from sins by Christ. Thus, when it is said, that the publican "went down to his house justified," (u) we cannot say that he obtained righteousness by any merit of works. The meaning therefore is, that after he had obtained the pardon of his sins, he was considered as righteous in the sight of God. He was righteous, therefore, not through any approbation of his works, but through God's gracious absolution. Wherefore Ambrose beautifully styles confession of sins, a legitimate justification.

IV. But leaving all contention about the term, if we attend to the thing itself, as it is described to us, every doubt will be removed. For Paul certainly describes justification as an acceptance, when he says to the Ephesians, "God hath predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted." (w) The meaning of this passage is the same as when in another place we are said to be "justified freely by his grace." (x) But in the fourth chapter to the Romans, he first mentions an imputation of righteousness, and immediately represents it as consisting in remission of sins. "David," says he, "describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven," &c. (y) He there, indeed, argues not concerning a branch, but the whole of justification. He also adduces the definition of it given by David, when he pronounces them to be blessed who receive the free forgiveness of their sins; whence it appears, that this righteousness of which he speaks is simply opposed to guilt. But the most decisive passage of all on this point, is where he teaches us that the grand object of the ministry of the gospel is, that we may "be reconciled to God," because he is pleased to receive us into his favour through Christ, "not imputing" our "trespasses unto"

(t) Acts xiii. 38, 39.

(u) Luke xviii. 14.

(w) Eph. i. 5, 6.

(x) Rom. iii. 24.

(y) Rom. iv. 6—8.

no other, abundantly appears from another declaration, which he had made just before: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (r) What is placing our righteousness in the obedience of Christ, but asserting, that we are accounted righteous only because his obedience is accepted for us as if it were our own? Wherefore Ambrose appears to me to have very beautifully exemplified this righteousness in the benediction of Jacob; that as he, who had on his own account no claim to the privileges of primogeniture, being concealed in his brother's habit, and invested with his garment, which diffused a most excellent odour, insinuated himself into the favour of his father, that he might receive the benediction to his own advantage, under the character of another; so we shelter ourselves under the precious purity of Christ our elder brother, that we may obtain the testimony of righteousness in the sight of God. The words of Ambrose are, "That Isaac smelled the odour of the garments, perhaps indicates, that we are justified not by works, but by faith; since the infirmity of the flesh is an impediment to works, but the brightness of faith, which merits the pardon of sin, conceals the error of our actions." And such is indeed the real fact; for that we may appear before the face of God to salvation, it is necessary for us to be perfumed with his fragrance, and to have all our deformities concealed and absorbed in his perfection. *

CHAPTER XII.

A CONSIDERATION OF THE DIVINE TRIBUNAL, NECESSARY TO A SERIOUS CONVICTION OF GRATUITOUS JUSTIFICATION.

THOUGH it appears, from the plainest testimonies, that all these things are strictly true, yet we shall not clearly discover how necessary they are, till we shall have taken a view of what ought to be the foundation of all this argument. In the first place, therefore, we should reflect that we are not treating of the righteousness of a human court, but of that of the heavenly tribunal; in order that we may not apply any diminutive standard of our own, to estimate the integrity of conduct required to satisfy the Divine justice. But it is wonderful, with what temerity and presumption this is commonly decided; and it is even observable, that no men give us more confident or pompous declamations concerning the righteousness of works, than

those who are notoriously guilty of open sins or addicted to secret vices. This arises from their never thinking of the righteousness of God, the smallest sense of which would prevent them from treating it with such contempt. And certainly it is exceedingly undervalued, if it be not acknowledged to be so perfect that nothing can be acceptable to it but what is absolutely complete and immaculate, such as it never was, nor ever will be, possible to find in fallen man. It is easy for any one in the cloisters of the schools, to indulge himself in idle speculations on the merit of works to justify men; but when he comes into the presence of God, he must bid farewell to these amusements, for there the business is transacted with seriousness, and no ludicrous logomachy practised. To this point, then, must our attention be directed, if we wish to make any useful inquiry concerning true righteousness; how we can answer the celestial Judge, when he shall call us to an account. Let us place that Judge before our eyes, not according to the spontaneous imaginations of our minds, but according to the descriptions given of him in the Scripture; which represents him as one whose refulgence eclipses the stars, whose power melts the mountains, whose anger shakes the earth, whose wisdom takes the subtle in their own craftiness, whose purity makes all things appear polluted, whose righteousness even the angels are unable to bear, who acquits not the guilty, whose vengeance, when it is once kindled, penetrates even to the abyss of hell.* Let him seat himself, I say, on the tribunal, to examine the actions of men: who will present himself fearless before his throne? "Who shall dwell with the devouring fire?" saith the prophet. "Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly," &c. (s) Now let him come forward, whoever he is. But this answer causes not one to appear. For, on the contrary, we hear this fearful speech, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (t) In truth, all must speedily perish, as it is written in another place, "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly; how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed from morning to evening." (u) Again: "Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight; how much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" (w) I confess that in the Book of Job mention is made of a right-

* See particularly the Book of Job.

(s) Isaiah xxxiii. 14, 15.

(t) Psalm cxxx. 3.

(u) Job iv. 17—20.

(w) Job xv. 15, 16.

eousness which is superior to the observance of the law. And it will be of use to remember this distinction; because, though any one could satisfy the law, he could not even then stand the scrutiny of that righteousness which exceeds all comprehension. Therefore, though Job is conscious of his own integrity, yet he is mute with astonishment, when he sees that God could not be pleased even with the sanctity of angels, if he were to enter into a strict examination of their works. I shall, therefore, now pass over that righteousness to which I have alluded, because it is incomprehensible, and content myself with asserting, that we must be worse than stupid, if, on an examination of our lives by the rule of the written law, we are not tormented with awful dread in consequence of so many maledictions, which God has designed to arouse us, and among the rest this general one: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." (x) In short, this whole controversy will be uninteresting and useless, unless every one present himself as a criminal before the celestial Judge, and voluntarily prostrate and humble himself in deep solicitude concerning his absolution.

II. To this point our eyes ought to have been raised, that we might learn rather to tremble through fear, than to indulge in vain exultation. It is easy, indeed, while the comparison is made only between men, for every man to imagine himself to be possessed of something which others ought not to condemn; but when we ascend to the contemplation of God, that confidence is immediately lost. And the case of our soul with respect to God is similar to that of our body with respect to the visible heavens; for the eye, as long as it is employed in beholding adjacent objects, receives proofs of its own perspicacity; but if it be directed towards the sun, dazzled and confounded with his overpowering brightness, it feels no less debility in beholding him, than strength in the view of inferior objects. Let us not, then, deceive ourselves with a vain confidence, although we consider ourselves equal or superior to other men. That is nothing to God, to whose decision this cause must be submitted. But if our insolence cannot be restrained by these admonitions, he will reply to us in the language which he addressed to the Pharisees: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God." (y) Go now, and among men proudly glory in your righteousness, while the God of heaven abominates it. But what is the language of the servants of God, who are truly taught by his Spirit? One says, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." (z) And another,

(x) Deut. xxvii. 26.

(y) Luke xvi. 15.

(z) Psalm cxliii. 2.

though in a sense somewhat different, "How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand." (a) Here we are plainly informed respecting the righteousness of God, that it is such as no human works can satisfy; and such as renders it impossible for us, if accused of a thousand crimes, to exculpate ourselves from one of them. The same idea of this righteousness had very properly been entertained by Paul, that "chosen vessel" (b) of God, when he professed, "I am conscious to myself of nothing; yet am I not hereby justified." (c)

III. Nor is it only in the sacred Scriptures that such examples are found. All pious writers discover similar sentiments. Thus Augustine says, "The only hope of all the pious, who groan under this burden of corruptible flesh, and amidst the infirmities of this life, is, that we have a Mediator, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." What is the meaning of this observation? If this is their only hope, where is any confidence in works? For when he asserts this to be the only one, he precludes every other. Bernard also says, "And in fact where can be found safe and solid rest and security for the weak, but in the wounds of the Saviour? There I dwell with the greater security, in proportion to his power to save. The world rages, the body oppresses, the devil lies in wait to destroy. I do not fall, because my foundation is on a firm rock. I have committed heinous sin. My conscience is disturbed, but shall not fall into despair, because I shall recall to remembrance the wounds of the Lord." From these considerations he afterwards concludes, "My merit, therefore, is the compassion of the Lord: I am clearly not destitute of merit, as long as he is not destitute of compassions. But if the mercies of the Lord be a multitude of mercies, my merits are likewise equally numerous. Shall I sing of my own righteousness? O Lord, I will remember thy righteousness alone. For it is mine also, since he is made of God righteousness unto me." Again, in another place: "This is the whole merit of man — to fix all his hope on him who saves the whole man." Likewise in another place, retaining peace to himself, and ascribing the glory to God, he says, "To thee let the glory remain undiminished. It is happy for me, if I have peace. The glory I entirely renounce; lest, if I usurp what is not mine, I lose also that which is offered me." In another place he is still more explicit: "Why should the Church be solicitous about merits, while it has a stronger and more secure reason for glorying in the designs of God? You need not inquire on account of what merits we hope for blessings, especially when you read in the prophet, 'Thus saith the

(a) Job ix. 2, 3.

(b) Acts ix. 15.

(c) 1 Cor. iv. 4.

Lord God ; I do not this for your sakes, but for mine holy name's sake.' (d) It suffices with respect to merit, to know that merits are not sufficient ; but as it suffices for merit not to presume on merits, so to be destitute of merits is sufficient cause of condemnation." We must excuse his custom of freely using the word *merits* for good works. But his ultimate design was to terrify hypocrites, who indulge themselves in a licentious course of sin against the grace of God ; as he presently declares : " Happy is the Church which wants neither merits without presumption, nor presumption without merits. It has some ground of presumption, but not merits. It has merits, but in order to deserve, not to presume. Is not the absence of presumption itself a merit ? Therefore the Church presumes the more securely, because it does not presume, having ample cause for glorying in the multitude of the Divine mercies."

IV. This is the real truth. The troubled conscience finds this to be the only asylum of safety, where it can enjoy any tranquillity, when it has to do with the Divine justice. For if the stars, which appeared most brilliant during the night, lose their splendour on the rising of the sun, what can we suppose will be the case with the most excellent innocence of man, when compared with the purity of God ? For that will be an examination inconceivably severe, which shall penetrate into all the most secret thoughts of the heart, and, as Paul says, " bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts ; " (e) which shall constrain the reluctant conscience to confess all those things which have now passed away even from our own remembrance. We shall be urged by an accusing devil, who has been privy to all the crimes which he has impelled us to perpetrate. There the external appearance of good works, which now is the sole object of esteem, will be of no avail ; sincerity of heart is all that will be required. Wherefore hypocrisy, not only that by which a man, conscious of his guilt before God, affects ostentation before men, but that also by which every man imposes on himself before God, for we are all prone to self-complacency and adulation ; hypocrisy in all its forms will then be overwhelmed with confusion, however it may now be intoxicated with presumption and pride. Persons who never look forward to such a spectacle, may, indeed, delightfully and complacently compose for themselves a temporary righteousness, of which they will immediately be stripped at the Divine judgment ; just as immense riches, accumulated by us in a dream, vanish as soon as we awake. But they who inquire seriously, and as in the presence of God, respecting the true standard of righteousness, will certainly find that all the actions of men, if estimated

(d) Ezek. xxxvi. 22.

(e) 1 Cor. iv. 5

according to their intrinsic worth, are utterly defiled and polluted; that what is commonly considered as righteousness, is, in the Divine view, nothing but iniquity; that what is accounted integrity, is mere pollution; and that what is reputed glory, is real ignominy.

V. From this contemplation of the Divine perfection, let us not be unwilling to descend to take a view of ourselves, without adulation or blind self-love. For it is not to be wondered at, if we are so extremely blind in this respect, since not one of us is sufficiently cautious of that pestilent self-indulgence, which the Scripture declares to be naturally inherent in us all. "Every way of man," says Solomon, "is right in his own eyes." (*f*) Again: "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes." (*g*) But what follows from this? Is he absolved from guilt by this delusion? Not at all; but, as is immediately added, "the Lord weigheth the spirits;" that is, while men are congratulating themselves on account of the external mask of righteousness which they wear, the Lord is at the same time weighing in his own balance the latent impurity of their hearts. Since we are so far from deriving any advantage, therefore, from such blandishments, let us not voluntarily delude ourselves to our own perdition. That we may examine ourselves properly, it is necessary for us to summon our conscience to the tribunal of God. For we have the greatest need of his light in order to detect the recesses of our depravity, which otherwise are too deeply concealed. For then only shall we clearly perceive the force of this language: "How can man be justified with God—man, who is" corruption and "a worm, abominable and filthy, and who drinketh iniquity like water?" (*h*) "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (*i*) Then also we shall experience what Job said concerning himself: "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." (*k*) For the complaint, which the prophet formerly made respecting Israel, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;" (*l*) is applicable not only to one period of time, but to all ages. For he there comprehends all to whom the grace of redemption was to extend; and the rigour of this examination ought to proceed till it shall have filled us with complete consternation, and thus prepared us to receive the grace of Christ. For he is deceived who supposes himself capable of this enjoyment, without having first been truly humbled. It is a well-known observation, that "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (*m*)

VI. But what means have we of humbling ourselves, except by submitting, all poor and destitute, to the Divine mercy?

(*f*) Prov. xxi. 2. (*g*) Prov. xvi. 2. (*h*) Job xv. 16; xxv. 4, 6.
 (*i*) Job xiv. 4. (*k*) Job ix. 20. (*l*) Isaiah liii. 6. (*m*) 1 Peter v. 5

For I do not call it humility, if we suppose that we have any thing left. And hitherto they have taught a pernicious hypocrisy, who have connected these two maxims — that we should entertain humble thoughts of ourselves before God, and that we should attach some dignity to our own righteousness. For if we address to God a confession which is contrary to our real sentiments, we are guilty of telling him an impudent falsehood; but we cannot think of ourselves as we ought to think, without utterly despising every thing that may be supposed an excellence in us. When we hear, therefore, from the Psalmist, that “God will save the afflicted people, but will bring down high looks,” (*n*) let us consider, first, that there is no way of salvation till we have laid aside all pride, and attained sincere humility; secondly, that this humility is not a species of modesty, consisting in conceding to God a small portion of what we might justly claim, as they are called humble among men, who neither haughtily exalt themselves nor behave with insolence to others, while they nevertheless entertain some consciousness of excellence: this humility is the unfeigned submission of a mind overwhelmed with a weighty sense of its own misery and poverty; for such is the uniform description of it in the word of God. When the Lord speaks thus in Zephaniah, “I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride; I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord;” (*o*) does he not clearly show who are truly humble? even such as are afflicted with a knowledge of their own poverty. On the contrary, he describes the proud as persons “rejoicing,” because this is the usual consequence of prosperity. But to the humble, whom he intends to save, he leaves nothing but that “they trust in the name of the Lord.” Thus also in Isaiah, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” (*p*) Again: “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (*q*) By the contrition so frequently mentioned, we must understand a wounded heart, which prevents a man from rising when humbled in the dust. With such contrition must our heart be wounded, if we desire, according to the declaration of the Lord, to be exalted with the humble. If this be not the case, we shall be abased by the powerful hand of God to our shame and disgrace. (*r*)

VII. And, not content with mere precepts, our excellent

(*n*) Psalm xviii. 27.
(*o*) Zeph. iii. 11, 12.

(*p*) Isaiah lxvi. 2.
(*q*) Isaiah lvii. 15.

(*r*) Matt. xxiii. 12. Luke xiv.
11; xviii. 14.

Master, in a parable, as in a picture, has presented us with an example of genuine humility. For he introduces a publican, who, "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." (s) We must not conclude these circumstances — his not presuming to look upwards, standing afar off, smiting upon his breast, and confessing himself a sinner — to be marks of feigned modesty; we may be certain that they were sincere evidences of the disposition of his heart. To him our Lord opposes a Pharisee, who said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." He openly confesses the righteousness which he has, to be the gift of God; but because he confides in his being righteous, he departs from the presence of God unacceptable and hateful to him. The publican, acknowledging his iniquity, is justified. Hence we may see how very pleasing our humiliation is in the sight of God; so that the heart is not open for the reception of his mercy unless it be divested of all idea of its own dignity. When this notion has occupied the mind, it precludes the admission of Divine mercy. That no one might have any doubt of this, Christ was sent by his Father into the world with a commission, "to preach good tidings unto the meek; to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to comfort all that mourn; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." (t) In pursuance of this commission, he invites to a participation of his benefits none but those who "labour and are heavy laden." (u) And in another place he says, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (v)

VIII. Therefore, if we would obey the call of Christ, let us dismiss all arrogance and carelessness from our minds. The former arises from a foolish persuasion of our own righteousness, when a man supposes himself to be possessed of any thing, the merit of which can recommend him to God; the latter may exist without any consideration of works. For multitudes of sinners, inebriated with criminal pleasures, and forgetful of the Divine judgment, are in a state, as it were, of lethargic insensibility, so that they never aspire after the mercy which is offered to them. But it is equally necessary for us to shake off such stupidity, and to reject all confidence in ourselves, in order that, being freed from every incumbrance, we may hasten to Christ, all destitute and hungry, to be filled with his blessings. For we shall never have sufficient confidence in him, unless

(s) Luke xviii. 13.

(t) Isaiah lxi. 1—3.

(u) Matt. xi. 28.

(v) Matt. ix. 13.

we entirely lose all confidence in ourselves; we shall never find sufficient encouragement in him, unless we are previously dejected in ourselves; we shall never enjoy sufficient consolation in him, unless we are utterly disconsolate in ourselves. We are prepared, therefore, to seek and obtain the grace of God, discarding at the same time all confidence in ourselves, and relying solely on the assurance of his mercy, "when," as Augustine says, "forgetting our own merits, we embrace the free gifts of Christ; because, if he sought merits in us, we should not come to his free gifts." With him Bernard fully agrees, when he compares proud men, that arrogate ever so little to their own merits, to unfaithful servants, because they unjustly claim the praise of the grace which passes through them; just as though a wall should say that it produces the sunbeams which it receives through a window. But not to dwell any longer on this, we may lay it down as a brief, but general and certain maxim, that he is prepared for a participation of the benefits of Divine mercy, who has wholly divested himself, I will not say of his righteousness, which is a mere nullity, but of the vain and airy phantom of righteousness; for as far as any man is satisfied with himself, so far he raises an impediment to the exercise of the grace of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO THINGS NECESSARY TO BE OBSERVED IN GRATUITOUS JUSTIFICATION.

HERE are two things to which we must always be particularly attentive; to maintain the glory of the Lord unimpaired and undiminished, and to preserve in our own consciences a placid composure and serene tranquillity with regard to the Divine judgment. We see how frequently and solicitously the Scripture exhorts us to render ascriptions of praise to God alone, when it treats of justification. And, indeed, the apostle assures us that the design of the Lord in conferring righteousness upon us in Christ, is to manifest his own righteousness. The nature of that manifestation he immediately subjoins: it is, "that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (*w*) The righteousness of God, we see, is not sufficiently illustrious, unless he alone be esteemed righteous, and communicate the grace of justification to the unworthy. For this reason it is his will "that every mouth be stopped, and all